"WOW, THAT BITCH IS CRAZY!": EXPLORING GENDERED PERFORMANCES IN LEISURE SPACES SURROUNDING REALITY TELEVISION

by

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STATEMENT OF DISSERTATION APPROVAL

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ABSTRACT

In *Reality Bites Back*, Jennifer L. Pozner states, "Women are bitches. Women are stupid. Women are incompetent at work and failures at home. Women are gold diggers. How do we know? Because reality TV tells us so." Not only does reality TV shape what we think about the "way things are," it also shapes how we think about and perform our own subjectivities, "who we are" as gendered, sexed, raced, classed humans. If the messages sent by reality TV are that women are incompetent, stupid, gold-digging bitches, what are women doing with those messages? Are we incorporating such messages, and writing them on our bodies? Repurposing them? Reproducing them? Actively and strongly resisting them? In other words, what is the work (on subjectivity production) of watching reality TV (watching other women being watched)?

The purpose of this dissertation was to take up that question by exploring the performative experiences of three women watching the 17th season of ABC's *The Bachelor*. Using duoethnography, we explored how we challenged, (re)produced, assigned, and constructed gendered subjectivities both for ourselves and for each other through our performances within leisure spaces surrounding *The Bachelor*. In three layers of data-generative surveillance, we 1) videotaped ourselves watching the show; 2) publicly reflected about our experiences of watching the show in a blog (www.blogaboutthebachelor.com); and, 3) spent a weekend together watching the videotape of ourselves watching the show (a hyper-reflexive experience).

Within the blog, we provided a space for women to react to, critique, support, or decenter messages sent by the show and one another. As such, the blog enacted a political project in order to decenter norms of practice offering more possibilities for gendered performance. In addition to this public political project, the results of our study as presented in five articles within this dissertation provide a methodological contribution to the body of knowledge by exploring what it means to do "empowering" "collaborative" feminist research. The ways in which we performed gendered subjectivities in reaction to messages sent by *The Bachelor* were inextricably entangled with the ways in which we performed gendered subjectivities as collaborative researchers.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

On the first day of my first class as an undergraduate at the University of Virginia, I sat nervously in one of 36 sections of the required calculus course. Not knowing what to expect, I physically relaxed in my seat as Dr. Robert Stong showed up wearing a white undershirt beneath well-worn denim overalls. This guy looked approachable….not like the pretentious image of "professor" I had gleaned from movies watched during high school. Without speaking, he walked to the chalkboard, picked up a piece of chalk, and wrote across the length of the three boards, "Fuck The System." He went on to explain that although the university had recently made the move to standardize all 36 sections of the course by mandating specific texts, course content, and computerized tests, he would not be teaching in such a way. If we wanted the standardized experience, we were encouraged to switch sections.

With those three words, Robert Stong provided Adorno's "shock of the unintelligible" for me. His choice to subvert the system enabled me to begin to think differently. Therefore, before I even knew that I would be completing a Ph.D., I began the steps toward writing this dissertation by realizing that it was possible to think differently, to push the limits of the system. Thank you, Dr. Stong, for operating outside the standardized, and inspiring me to work to do so as well.

Although "the system" will not allow me to put the names of multiple authors on the title page of this dissertation, in this section, I hope to acknowledge and thank those

who I think deserve much of the credit for this piece of writing. During the course of my doctoral program, I have come to realize that no piece of writing is ever single-handedly authored. We think with theorists, with friends, with colleagues, with families, with inanimate objects, with dreams, with the environment, with musicians, with artists, and on and on. While I have credited theorists by citing and conversing with them within my papers, much credit and thanks is due to many others.

First, I want to thank Rose and Bobbie for collaborating with me on this research project. Without their investment, interest, and commitment, this project would not have been possible. They provided companionship, support, laughter, and challenged me to think. Most importantly, I wish to thank both of them for their friendship. I would also like to thank Anita for her commitment to blogging with us each week and sharing her thoughtful, poignant, and witty comments.

This dissertation would not have been possible without the support of an incredible committee. I feel extraordinarily lucky to have found a committee full of professors who all are actively pushing boundaries and taking stands in their fields. Thank you immensely Dr. Karen Paisley, Dr. Corey Johnson, Dr. Wanda Pillow, Dr. Mary Sara Wells, Dr. Robert Gehl, and Dr. Matthew Brownlee. Your intellectual inspiration, thought-provoking feedback, relentless support, and refusal to accept mediocre work has made me proud of this final product and has taught me to become a better writer, both for which I owe you my deepest gratitude. Quite frankly, I had fun thinking with and learning from each of you. I hope that this dissertation is just the beginning of many more years of working, thinking, teaching, and collaborating together.

During my time at the University of Utah, I have benefited greatly from courses with professors who have introduced me to an entirely new landscape of thinking and doing research. Dr. Mary Strine, Dr. Robert Gehl, Dr. Wanda Pillow, and Dr. Julie Stewart each designed courses that quite literally "rocked my world" by introducing me to critical theory, cultural studies, performance studies, and poststructuralism. Thank you all for teaching me how to think, look, research, and practice "awry."

I am also deeply thankful for fellow graduate students with whom I have hashed out ideas over beers, and who have supported me through the low moments of grad school and cheered me on during the high points. Jeremy Jostad, Jeff Rose, Eric Legg, Ben Altschuler, and Antonio De La Garza, thank you, thank you, thank you! I look forward to many more brews and a lifetime of friendship.

"She's/He's a good human" Dr. Karen Paisley has said to me about a handful of really good, smart, creative individuals. Karen doesn't use this phrase often. When she says it, I know that the person about whom she is speaking is truly special, someone with a unique spark and a great heart, someone who you meet and will never forget. The thing is, Karen not only embodies this....she has made me a better human. Thank you Karen for your unfathomable support, for practicing what you preach and expecting me to do the same, for believing that boundary pushing is possible and often good, and for showing me what great teaching, researching, writing, and mentoring looks like. I feel empowered, and I don't use that word lightly, through my time spent working with you. Karen, I want to be an academic when I grow up so that I might have the chance to impact someone's life like you have mine.

Lastly, this entire adventure would not have been possible without unconditional and unrelenting support and love from my parents and two brothers, who have always encouraged and fed my creativity. Thank you tremendously. I love you! Finally, I cannot thank my partner Jeremy enough for embodying all that is sung in *The Weight* by offering space, place, shoulder, perspective, laughter, dreams, and love in order for me to "take a load off" and enjoy the process.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the time between waking up and arriving at the office, only 45 minutes go by. In those 45 minutes, I am told multiple stories of how I am supposed to perform my gender. After I wake up and pour myself a large glass of iced tea, I log onto my Facebook account and see three ads running down the side of the page telling me stories about the ideal female body, what it should wear (knee-high boots), what its weight should be (weight-loss ad), and that it should reproduce (baby photographer). I skim a few stories on my homepage, and "like" a picture of my girlfriend's big white wedding. I then hop on the bus, which has an ad for liposuction on the side of it. I glance out the window as we pass two female joggers wearing pink velour jumpsuits that say "fox" and "sexy" across their butts. The music on the bus is Taylor Swift singing "Romeo take me, somewhere we can be alone… You'll be the prince and I'll be the princess. It's a love story; baby, just say 'yes!'" As I exit the bus and begin walking towards the office, I run into a friend who tells me I look cute in my denim dress, brown leggings, and rustic riding boots. As a polite Southern woman, I reciprocate the compliment. She recounts a story about her "boyfriend dramas" and how a little "retail therapy" made her feel better. At no point in the day do I forget that I am living in a system that tells me that I need to perform my gender in a certain way. At no point do I forget that I am both enabled and imprisoned by a normalized way of gender performance.

But then, I come home, invite a few girlfriends over, pour glasses of wine, and spend my leisure time watching The Bachelor, *a show that perpetuates some of the most heinously oppressive stereotypes imprisoning women and women's bodies in the current patriarchal system. And…I love it.*

What does it mean to knowingly be oppressed by a patriarchal system limiting possibilities of intelligible gender performance, and then choose to watch (and enjoy watching) a television show that perpetuates the imprisoning oppressive stereotypes? How do women viewers carve out agency and resistance in such a space? How do women's performances repeat the familiar and normalized versions of gender while displacing "that which enables" (Lather, 2007, p. 39) this normalized production in the first place? I explore these questions during the course of this study. But first, what are some of the messages sent to women by media such as reality television?

> Women are bitches.
> Women are stupid.
> Women are incompetent at work and failures at home.
> Women are gold diggers.
> How do we know? Because reality TV tells us so. (Pozner, 2010, p. 97)

For Pozner (2010), these are the truths that reality TV teaches viewers about women. Specifically, she reads reality television shows such as *The Bachelor* as "our prime purveyor of…cultural hegemony….media is largely responsible for *how* we know *what* we know. In other words, media shapes what we think of as 'the truth' about 'the way things are'" (p. 97). Not only does reality TV shape what we think about the "way things are," it also shapes how we think about and perform our own subjectivities, "who we are" as gendered, sexed, raced, classed humans. Reality TV shows use a "rubric of 'reality' and authenticity" in order to amplify "the power to define perceptions of

identity" (p. 98) and thus perpetuate a hegemonic structure. The notion of "cultural hegemony" (Gramsci, 1971), refers to the ways in which the dominant group in society keeps its position not by force, but by controlling the ideology and belief systems of a group of people. Therefore, reality TV shows such as *The Bachelor* can be seen as keeping White, heterosexual, "domestically-inclined" (Pozner, 2010, p. 26) women in the dominant position in society.

Scholars such as Pozner (2010) have critiqued what they think is a shallow interaction that most American viewers have with reality TV. "Too often what passes for discussion about reality TV is limited to 'Wow, that bitch was crazy!'…We need a deeper debate in this country about the meaning and implications of reality TV's backlash against women's rights and social progress" (p. 17). In line with this thinking, most of the literature surrounding reality television (cf. Brown, 2005; Cato & Carpentier, 2010; Fairclough, 2004; Graham-Bertolini, 2004; Mendible, 2004), in particular, *The Bachelor* (cf. Bonsu, Darmody, & Parmentier, 2010; Brophy-Baermann, 2005; Dubrofsky, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2009, 2011; Dubrofsky & Hardy, 2008; Yep & Camacho, 2004), critiques the ways women are portrayed, and what sorts of messages are sent to women watching the show. However, what is not thoroughly explored in the literature is how women, as viewers, are interacting with messages sent to them. If the messages sent by reality TV are that women are incompetent, stupid, gold-digging, bitches, what are women doing with those messages? Are we incorporating such messages, and writing them on our bodies? Repurposing them? Reproducing them? Actively and strongly resisting them?

In other words, what is the work (on subjectivity production) of watching reality

TV (watching other women being watched)? Dubrofsky (2011) takes up Andrejevic's (2004) question "what is the work of being watched?" in her book addressing surveillance on what she calls "The Bachelor Industry" (which consists of ABC's *The Bachelor, The Bachelorette,* and *The Bachelor Pad*). She asserts that the work of being watched, on these shows in particular, is the production of a "rationality" in which certain behaviors for women become naturalized. For Dubrofsky, The Bachelor Industry privileges compulsory heterosexuality and Whiteness, and normalizes certain versions of "woman," specifically, a particular type of emotional state (not crazy, or too emotional, but also open enough to find love), and a certain type of "beautiful" body (generally thin, stylish, and with flawless skin). Dubrofsky, after thoroughly exploring the question, "what is the work of being watched?" poses the following question in the final chapter of her book: "What is the work of watching others being watched?" (p. 127).

The purpose of this dissertation is to take up that question by exploring the performative (Butler, 1990a) experiences of three women watching the 17th season of ABC's *The Bachelor*. Unlike Pozner (2010), I am not ready to view conversations between female viewers such as "Wow, that bitch was crazy!" as shallow. In looking at multiple layers of performance and subject production within the leisure spaces surrounding *The Bachelor* television show, I offer more complex reads of such conversations.

In this introduction, I begin by arguing that leisure spaces are an important site for performance and negotiation of one's gender. This is followed by a rationale for studying leisure spaces surrounding reality TV and for choosing *The Bachelor* in particular as my research site. I end this chapter with my research questions.

Performing Gendered Subjectivity in Leisure Spaces

It was the first day of the Naval Academy summer soccer camp; I was 12 years old. My granddad, a Marine Corps Colonel, and I were standing in line to register. I looked around and didn't see any other girls in line. My granddad had not done his homework, or maybe he had (to this day, it is a mystery to me), but the Naval Academy soccer camp was an all-boys camp. However, at registration, after a quiet conversation with the camp director (his status as Colonel having some pull I am sure), I was allowed to stay.

(One week later…)

Granddad picked me up from camp and asked me what we should do that afternoon. When I was trying to practice my "headers" at soccer camp, my hair was falling into my eyes, so I asked him if I could go get a haircut. He obliged and took me to his usual barber shop. I hopped up in the maroon pleather barber chair as his buddy the barber whisked the black cape around me, fastening the Velcro around the back of my neck. "What can we do for ya?" asked the barber. "I want a bowl cut like all the boys from soccer camp," I responded. The barber glanced at my granddad and received a confirming nod. I left with the clean lines of the bowl cut, the back half of my head freshly shaven. I was pleased!

Once home, Nana (my grandmother), after greeting us, yanked my granddad into the other room. Although the door was shut, I overheard their conversation. She was giving him a tongue-lashing for taking me to his barber and getting me a "boy's" haircut.

My experience at that camp, and arriving home with a bowl cut, was the first time

I was aware of the ways I was supposed to perform my gender, as a girl. At camp, it was not expected that I excel at soccer. And, Nana's response to my haircut sent me the message that little girls were not supposed to wear their hair in such a way. It became clear that gender was not something I *was,* it was something I *did.* It was something that I *performed,* and it was through those performances that I became "girl."[1] Phrases like, "because that's what little girls *do,*" or "that's how girls *act,*" or "that's not *lady-like*" were common as I was not so subtly told by parents, teachers, and grandparents how I should properly perform my gender. I also learned that my gender was not something I achieved ("OK, **now** I'm officially a woman"), but something that I was continuously performing and negotiating within certain boundaries; not all performances were possible. The power structures within which I negotiated my performances as a gendered subject were much more apparent as a little girl; they came mostly in the form of my mother. I wore my hair in a bowl cut through the eighth grade (mom was actually pleased to not have to deal with combing my long hair), but not wearing a dress to church was not a possibility, nor was slouching or sitting in my dress with my legs uncrossed.

Fast-forward 18 years (see the opening narrative), and the messages I receive on how to perform my gender come from many more sources such as Facebook, TV, billboards, and girlfriends (although some still come from my mother). Whether at soccer camp, surfing Facebook, or while watching *The Bachelor,* often, the ways in which I negotiate and perform my gendered subjectivities happens in leisure spaces.

Scholars assert that in leisure time and spaces, one can explore who one is, and who it is possible to become (Kleiber, Walker, & Mannell, 2011; Rojek, 2006).

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[1] This example provides an explanation of Judith Butler's (1990a) notion of performativity. See p. 10 for further explanation of this concept.

Theorized as liminal spaces (Turner, 1987; Van Gennep, 1960) or third places (Oldenberg 1989, 2001), leisure spaces are often conceptualized as unique spaces where individuals have autonomy and choice (above and beyond, for example, work spaces). Leisure spaces also exist within societal and cultural power structures and can be seen as spaces where we are disciplined to "properly" perform as subjects. According to Johnson (2002), "Leisure can also be used to promote and enforce the discourse and ideals of those in power….leisure might be used as a form of social control to keep individuals and/or groups of individuals in a state of inequality" (p. 4). Leisure spaces, such as watching reality television, are often where a) messages are sent about how to perform as gendered subjects, and b) individuals practice "correct" gender performances. As Green (1998) points out, not only are messages *sent* in those spaces, but also, through practice, gender is *made* in leisure spaces; "Women's leisure can be conceptualized as a site where femininities and masculinities are 'made' and re-constructed, in relation to shifting relations and cultural forms" (p. 183).

Feminist leisure scholars explore leisure as gendered, as a space for gender production, and assert that gender is performed in unique ways in leisure settings (cf. Aitchison, 1997, 1999, 2000a, 2000b; Henderson, 1994; Henderson & Bialeschki, 1999; Henderson & Gibson, 2013; Johnson, 2005, 2008; Johnson & Samdahl, 2005; Samdahl, Jacobson, & Hutchinson 1998; Scranton, 1994; Shaw, 1994, 1999, Talbot, 1979). As individual women perform certain versions of "woman" in their leisure spaces, they have a collective impact upon cultural gender ideology. Shaw (1999) explains:

> The impact of leisure on gender [is] both individual and collective. At the individual level, leisure experiences, self-expression, and the development of self-identity through leisure often involve the expressions of attitudes and beliefs about femininity and masculinity…. Individual attitudes and beliefs function

> collectively in the construction and reconstruction of gender ideologies and gender relations in the broader society. (p. 276)

As Shaw asserts, much is at stake, both individually and collectively, in the ways we perform gender in leisure spaces. Our micro performances of resistance/reproduction influence macro performances of power and vice versa. Drawing from Butler's (1990a) and Foucault's (1988, 1995) theories of subjectivity, I assert that what is at stake as gender is performed in leisure spaces is *subjectivity*, including how we come to know ourselves as subjects, and how we *physically* constitute our *selves*. G*ender* and *subjectivity* are central to this dissertation; therefore, I introduce them here.

Gender as Performative

Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me. This mantra taught in kindergarten highlights both epistemological and ontological beliefs. From this statement, we teach our children that physically, words can do them no harm. We must simply ignore hurtful phrases and not let them "get under our skin." Feminist poststructuralists such as Butler (1990a, 1990b, 1992, 1997a, 1997b, 2005) would disagree. Using Althusser's (1971) notion of interpellation, and Foucault's (1995) notion of subjectivation, Butler argues that speech is an act, it is performative (Austin, 1975), having the power to constitute the subject. So, for Butler, words can not only do us physical harm, they also have the power to create us as subjects. Specifically, Butler's focus is on the power of language to create humans as gendered subjects. For Butler, gender (and also sex) is not an essential ontological state, it is, instead, performative.

> Performativity refutes a Cartesian metaphysics that divides the discursive and the material by demonstrating the social, cultural, and political force of language, by tracking the deeply consequential and material effects of language upon various arrangements of subjects into a 'social.'(Anderson, 2010, p. 5)

The classic example supporting this argument, which is quite pertinent to the premise of *The Bachelor*, is the utterance, "I now pronounce you man and wife." These words, when proclaimed by a recognized authority, enact a material change, making two individuals into a single entity recognized by law and religion. The words have constitutive force because of the recognized social, political, historical, and religious power of the authority of the sender of the words. The receivers of the words and the witnesses also are actors in making the force of the language constitutive. The couple recognizes themselves as different after the ritual. This concept seems relatively straightforward, and most would not contest it, but what happens when the following claim is made?:

> One is not born, but becomes a woman. No biological, psychological, or economic fate determines the figure that the human female presents in society: it is civilization as a whole that produces this creature, intermediate between male and eunuch, which is described as feminine. (de Beauvoir, 1952, p. 249)

Butler (1990b) agrees with this statement, and proclaims, "Gender reality is performative which means, quite simply, that it is real only to the extent that it is performed" (p. 521).

It is not my point to say that physical difference of some sort is not real and does not exist but, instead, that what those differences *mean* and how we interact with them is socially constructed. Stuart Hall (1996a, 1996b, 1997), using the social identifier of race as his focus, explains this phenomenon. He claims that race is discursive, closer to a language than a system of biological differences.

> There are probably differences of all sorts in the world….there is no reason to deny this reality or this diversity…it is only when these differences have been organized within language, within discourse, within systems of meaning, that the differences can be said to acquire meaning and become a factor in human culture and regulate conduct. (Hall, 1997)

I do not deny the reality that I have a vagina and someone else has a penis, but argue that the way that we come to understand "gender" and, then, what it means to be "woman"

happens within the realm of the discursive. The discursive has a real effect on how I understand myself, how I act, how others perceive me, and how I am treated.

Finally, my conceptualization of gender is aligned with feminist theories of intersectionality (McCall, 2005; Watson & Scraton, 2013). Intersectionality recognizes that gender is also raced, sexed, classed, and placed in a specific social, political, and economic context that affects the ways in which a woman will experience her subjectivity in relation to various institutional structures (Visweswaran, 1997).

Subjectivity

For the purpose of this dissertation, the notion of "subjectivity" was used in lieu of "identity." I chose subjectivity, because it is fluid, multiple, constantly in motion, and not able to be pinned down. Hall (1996a), in asking us "who needs identity?," suggests that the notion of "identity" has a history of referring to a fixed, stable, clear-cut category. Using Derridian methods of deconstruction, he posed that we put the notion of identity under erasure; drawing a line through it to indicate the limits of it as currently understood as a construct. Subjectivity, unlike traditional notions of identity (c.f. Arnett, 2010; Erickson, 1959; Marica, 1980, 1993) cannot be "developed" as asserted by social psychologists, as a part of a stage of one's healthy life path. Subjectivity is slippery and messy and is constantly changing depending upon one's location within social, economic, historical, and political contexts. The concept of subjectivity recognizes the severe limits (sometimes even violent) of identity categories such as male, female, Black, White, and highlights that the ways in which we understand ourselves as selves is not separate from the power structures surrounding us. We cannot, with our own willpower, "develop" or "try-on" whatever identity we want. There are macro-structures of power that limit what

is possible as an intelligible performance of one's subjectivity.

Imagine this scene on a street: A pedestrian is walking down a sidewalk and a police officer yells out, "Hey you, there!" At which point, the pedestrian stops walking and turns to face the police officer. This is the example that Althusser (1971) uses to explain his notion of subjectivation. In turning, the pedestrian, through acknowledging the officer's interpellation, becomes a "subject" in a multiple-layered way. This multi-layered notion is quite similar to Foucault's concept of subjectivation. "Foucault's concept of subjectivation implies that we experience ourselves as subjects insofar as we have been summoned into such a belonging and insofar as we recognize ourselves as such within the context of a given set of institutional power relations" (Anderson, 2010, p. 4).

For Foucault, "'subjectivity' is not the free and spontaneous expression of our interior truth. It is the way we are led to think about ourselves, so we will police and present ourselves in the correct way, as not insane, criminal, undisciplined, unkempt, perverse or unpredictable" (Mansfield, 2000, p. 10). Butler (1997a, 1997b), in adding performativity to the equation, highlights a psychic notion to the performative act of turning that the pedestrian does in response to the police officer's interpellation. "That is, the subject on the street, summoned into the social exchange of interpellation, does not merely acknowledge that she or he is the referent of the call; she or he comes to recognize herself or himself through the currency of call and response" (Anderson, 2010, p. 7).

With this notion from Butler, we get the sense that there are two power structures in play: the macro institutions of power and the micro performances of the individual.

Not only is the subject a subject only and always within power forces outside of itself, but the subject also plays a role in her own subjectivation, as she begins to coopt these outside images and sees herself and, thus, performs, as a certain type of subject. The force of power "is not literally internalized, but incorporated, with the consequences that bodies are produced which signify that law on and through the body; there the law is manifest as the essence of their selves, the meaning of their soul, their conscience, the law of their desire" (Butler, 1990a, p. 135). So, if we use the example of the police officer yelling "hey you" and the person turning, for Butler, the performance of physically turning one's body 180 degrees to face the officer also comes with a psychic or performative element in which, through turning, one sees herself as part of the system to which she is subjected.

Thus far, I have established that leisure spaces are often spaces in which one performs as a gendered subject. Gendered performances in leisure spaces impact the individual as well as greater cultural gender ideologies. Power structures (both macro and micro) determine the possibilities of gendered performances, and for the construction of a gendered individual. In this dissertation, I explored women's gendered performances in leisure spaces, what was possible, what was not possible, and how these performances reinforced and/or resisted the status quo. For this study, I chose the setting of leisure spaces related to women watching the reality TV dating show, *The Bachelor*. I present my rationale for this choice in the next two sections.

Reality TV and Leisure Studies

Life doesn't imitate art; it imitates bad TV –Woody Allen

For me, at 30 years of age, leisure at soccer camps has been replaced with bridal and baby showers, bluegrass music, going out to eat, shopping, hiking, cleaning the house, snowboarding, and watching television. If I were to name the leisure activity I spend the most time on, it would be watching television (I am not proud of this fact). In particular, I love watching reality TV. Shows such as *The Bachelor*, *What Not to Wear, Say Yes to the Dress, House Hunters, Here Comes Honey Boo Boo,* and *Anthony Bourdain* are some of my favorites. I am neither alone in my love for reality TV, nor in spending the majority of my leisure time watching TV.

According to the US Bureau of Labor's 2010 American Time Use Survey (see Figure 1), on average, Americans spend about 2.7 hours watching television daily, accounting for just over half of their leisure time (American Time Use Survey, 2011). In the field of leisure studies, leisure experiences of viewing reality TV are understudied, although leisure scholars are uniquely positioned to advance research into such spaces. Watching television, reality television programs or not, is most often a leisure experience; not only that, it is a popular everyday leisure experience. Leisure scholars do not thoroughly understand the experience of watching reality television through a leisure lens. In 2010 (the same year the above data were gathered), scholars published 75 articles in three widely recognized leisure oriented journals*: Journal of Leisure Research, Leisure Studies,* and *Leisure Sciences*. Of those articles,[2] however, only one article dealt remotely

[2] This count does not include editorials, research notes, or book reviews. In *Leisure Studies* in 2010, there were three book reviews published on books dealing with television. See Redhead (2010a, 2010b) and Brabazon (2010).

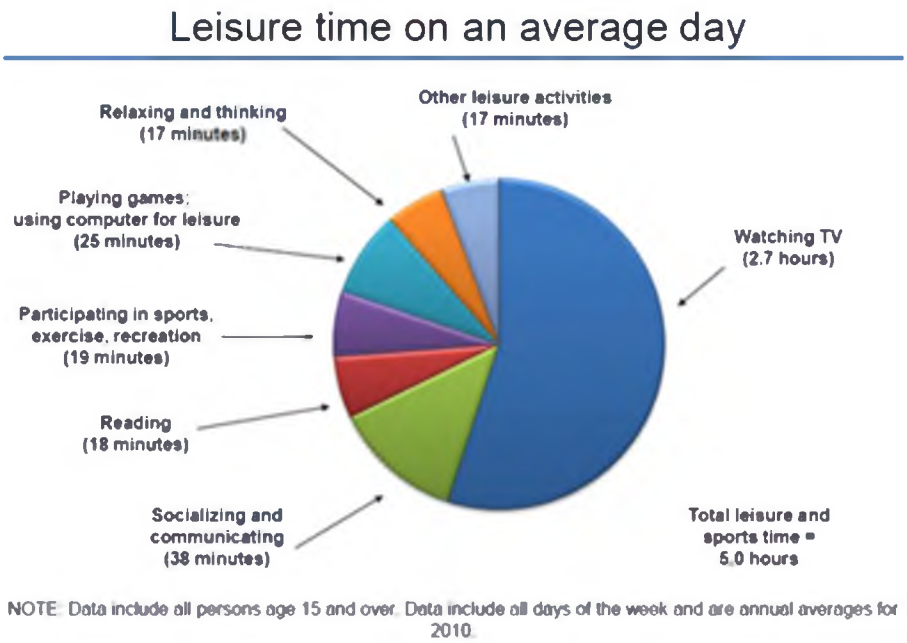

Figure 1: Bureau of Labor Statistics, American Time Use Survey 2010 Retrieved from: http://www.bls.gov/tus/

with television (a study about documentary filmmaking by Lashua, 2010). Most of the articles presented results of studies of leisure "participation in sports, exercise, and recreation," on which only 19 minutes of American's daily leisure time are spent. Other articles discussed activities such as hiking (Svarstad, 2010), fishing (Schroeder & Fulton, 2010), high altitude climbing (Bassi & Dellfave, 2010), volunteer tourism (Bailey & Russell, 2010), backcountry skiing (Furman, Shooter, & Schumann, 2010), rugby (Spraklen, Timnins, & Long, 2010), gay men's football (Jones & McCarthy, 2010), the Olympic Games (Dansaro & Puttilli, 2010), clubs (Dermat, Ravn, & Thorsen, 2010), and birdwatching (Scott & Lee, 2010).

Outside of the leisure journals, studies of reality TV have appeared frequently. Communication, Sociology, and New Media Studies scholars have explored viewer and participant performativity, gender dynamics, audience views and experiences of "reality,"

and audience and participant surveillance and consumption (c.f. Andrejevic, 2004; Barton, 2009; Brown, 2005; Couldry, 2008; Ferris, Smith, Greenberg, & Smith, 2007; Hautakangas, 2010; Hill, 2002, 2005; Roberti, 2007).

Watching Reality TV: Technology and Transmedia Storytelling

In addition to filling the gap in the leisure literature, another reason I chose reality television rather than "traditional" scripted television programs has to do with a higher level of audience participation. Scholars have noted that, in postmodern society, one's interaction with reality television is not limited to the physical leisure space of the living room (Gehl & Gibson, 2011). Instead, the stories one receives from reality TV shows are interactive, between multiple communities of viewers and across multiple media platforms (Ouellette & Murray, 2009). Also known as "transmedia storytelling" (Jenkins, 2006), when we watch a reality television show such as *The Bachelor*, we not only watch it in our living rooms, we might also text, Facebook, and Tweet about it. We might re-watch clips later on computers or cell phones; we might pick up a magazine to read about our favorite (or most despised) contestant; we might comment on ABC's community board on *The Bachelor*; we might watch YouTube video mash-ups that highlight the most ridiculous scenes, turning the women into spectacles; we might read Chris Harrison's (the host of the show) blog, or try and find out the ending on Reality Steve's blog; we might take ABC's quiz to test our knowledge of previous contestants; we might buy *The Bachelor: Video Game* on Amazon.com and play it on our Nintendo DS; and finally, we might talk about the show with our officemates at work.

On reality TV shows such as *The Bachelor,* viewers have the chance to become participants on the show by applying to be bachelorettes themselves. This participatory

phenomenon is also seen in audience voting through text messaging in shows like *American Idol* and *Dancing with the Stars.* Viewers become "prosumers" rather than simply consumers of the show (Bonsu et al., 2010). The potential exists for audience performances to shape the way gender is constructed and what sorts of performances within the shows are allowed to continue.

Gehl and Gibson (2011) used the term "intertextual media object" to describe the reality TV show, *Blog Cabin.* As an intertextual media object, *Blog Cabin* had four distinct layers:

1. The television text, with its history of production (capital and labor) and its connection to advertisers both via product placement and spot ads;
2. The television audience, who consumed and interpreted the television show and advertisements, and who may or may not have participated via the website or blog;
3. The website for the show, with its own production inputs (again, capital and labor) and its own relation to advertisers (often coming from the same sponsors as the broadcast portion of the show); and
4. The users of the website (presumably, but not necessarily, drawn from the broadcast audience). (p. 2)

These four layers are applicable to *The Bachelor.* Additionally, I added a few layers. *The Bachelor,* aside from having the television text and official website including multiple blogs, community boards, video extras, and *Bachelor* quizzes, also has an official Facebook page and Twitter account. Those social media sites add additional layers to the multiple media texts and audiences. In addition, although these are not "official" reports, gossip magazines, which divulge stories of each show and of the "secret" lives of the bachelor and bachelorettes to viewers as they wait in line to check out at the grocery store, were included in the layers of media texts that make up the technology of *The Bachelor.* From here forth, I use the term "*The Bachelor* technologies" to refer to the multiple-layered texts in various leisure spaces surrounding a viewer's interaction with

the show.

Why *The Bachelor*?

The Bachelor is the most popular reality television dating show to date. In its 17th season, *The Bachelor* has consistently been rated amongst the top programs for the 18-49 age demographic (Dubrofsky, 2011). With average viewership between 7.9 and 16.7 million viewers, *The Bachelor* is "among the top five most profitable U.S. reality shows pulling in a network profit of $38.2 million for the fourth season (with a price tag of $231,400 per thirty-second advertising spot" (Dubrofsky, 2011, p. 5). Further, *The Bachelor* has become an international phenomenon, with at least eight countries to date making their own versions of the show (see Appendix A).

Aside from the sheer number of women watching the show, and its financial success, I also chose *The Bachelor* for the fairy tale tropes presented through the storyline. As American girls, "pinked" out of the womb, many of us read stories of Cinderella, Snow White, and Rapunzel, among others, which present us with tropes such as "happily ever after," "rags to riches," "princess for a day (soon to become princess for life)," "prince charming (who usually pursues his one true love)," "dances, balls, and romance," "wicked witch/stepmother," and "fairy godmother." *The Bachelor* presents us with similar notions; it is a sort of fairy tale geared toward an adult female audience.

The Bachelor is a 12-episode reality TV show in which 25 "eligible" women date one man—the bachelor—in this case, Sean. The goal is for him to "find true love" on this "incredible journey" and choose one woman to whom to propose in the dramatic season finale (sound a bit like Cinderella?). Each 2-hour episode consists of the bachelor going on extravagant dates (rags to riches) in an attempt to get to know the women better. There

are typically a couple of "one-on-one" dates each week (princess for a day) and one "group date" in which the bachelor takes several women out together. Each episode culminates with a lengthy, formal cocktail party (dances, balls, romance) to give each girl one last chance to interact with the bachelor (prince charming), followed by a "rose ceremony" in which Sean has fewer and fewer roses to give out each week (think "musical chairs"). Whoever does not receive a rose goes home. When the bachelor whittles the girls down to four, he goes on a "hometown date" with each girl to meet her family. When the competition is down to two, the bachelor takes each girl to meet his family. In the finale, he may propose in some sort of dramatic setting (think Swiss Alps or Fijian Beach) with a diamond ring (happily ever after).

Research Questions

In realizing that what was at stake were (and still are) possibilities for subjectivity production (my own included), this dissertation was a political project utilizing "research as praxis" (Lather, 1986) in order to decenter norms of practice offering more possibilities for gendered performance. I explored how women challenged, (re)produced, assigned, and constructed gendered subjectivities both for themselves and for other women through their performances within leisure spaces surrounding *The Bachelor*. Not only did I want to explore the ways in which subjectivities were constructed, I also aimed to challenge the "White, middle-class, heterosexual, thin, tan, 'I want to settle down and have babies'" metanarrative preached to audiences by the producers of the show. Therefore, a second goal of my study was to provide a space (the blog) for women to react to, critique, support, or decenter messages sent by the show in order to enact a "performance of possibilities" (Madison, 2012) opening up more possibilities for the

ways in which to perform gendered subjectivities. I looked at three performances of gendered subjectivity. The following three questions guided my inquiry:

- How do women watching the Bachelor view constructions of women within the show? [performance one]
- How do women perform their own womanhood in relation to multiple performances within physical viewing spaces and media outlets (*The Bachelor* technologies)? [performance two]
- What is revealed when women reflexively watch their own gendered performances? [performance three]

In the next chapter, I outline the paradigmatic foundations for the study along with the methodology I used to guide the way I thought about data generation. Then, I discuss my methods of data generation and analysis.

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CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

The object of this inquiry was performativity, specifically, performances of multiple gendered subjectivities. Therefore, I employed a performance paradigm to look at the ways in which gender is performed. I have come to understand the performance paradigm by thinking across paradigms. Particularly, feminist poststructuralism heavily influenced my thinking. Before I outline the key elements of the performance paradigm as they shape this study, I begin by locating my understanding of the performance paradigm as coupled with the knowledge-production projects of feminist poststructuralism.

Feminist Poststructural Influences

A dominant theme in both feminist and poststructural projects is the issue of knowledge production. Feminists argue that knowledge has been created that privileges a certain way of knowing (usually attributed to a patriarchal (Lather, 2004), White (Scheurich & Young, 1997), heterosexual (Britzman, 1995) majority), and prohibits the inclusion of other ways of knowing (Olesen, 2011). Poststructuralists look at the role of language in knowledge construction. In asserting there is a relationship between power and knowledge (Foucault, 1995), a poststructuralist looks at what is normalized in

society, what is privileged or placed in the center, and then, through deconstruction, seeks to trace (and decenter) why and how we come to know that thing as "normal."

Feminists adopt poststructuralism in order to enable them to critique that which is normalized—(patriarchal, raced, sexed, knowledge systems)—in order to decenter these epistemologies and make room for other ways of knowing. Rejecting foundationalist ways of knowing, feminist poststructuralists assert that there is no innocent way of knowing (Lather, 2007). In order to put cracks in the previously seeming rock-solid foundation of objective, innocent, oppressive, positivist, and postpositivist patriarchal systems of knowledge such as those touted by foundationalism, feminist poststructuralists have championed an unstable epistemology, which constantly interrogates power structures forming that which is normal, including the epistemology itself.

The Bachelor has been critiqued for furthering the oppressive structures of patriarchy by normalizing White, heterosexual, thin, "I want to settle down and have babies" performances of gender. The political project of this study was to decenter these norms, offering more possibilities for performing one's gender. Rather than align myself with the goals of a critical project, in which I would work towards a solution, (potentially creating another, albeit different, power imbalance), I see my work as allied with a poststructural project of decentering and questioning the power structures behind the subject positions we choose and how we choose to perform them. I want to make it clear that I do not think that the way in which women (both bachelorettes and the viewers) perform their gendered subjectivities within the *Bachelor* technologies is wholly a *bad* thing, even if the ways in which they are performing is reproducing oppressive structures. I do not think that we need to "throw out" such performances and begin to perform

entirely differently. That would simply replace one oppressive hierarchy with another. Similarly, I do not think that we should "throw out" research frameworks such as those associated with positivism that perpetuate an oppressive knowledge structure in favor of any one other structure (no matter how innocent it seems). The goal, rather, is to reconfigure rather than replace, it is towards multiplicity rather than singularity, a horizontal movement as opposed to vertical, and toward uncomfortable and nervous (Stewart, 1996) rather than sure. Questioning and requestioning our assumptions as researchers and how we think we have (re)produced knowledge is a continuous process in destabilizing a presumably innocent knowledge. It is my thinking that in constantly unveiling inequalities, and opening up more possibilities, we gain agency as political subjects. With this goal in mind, I chose a research paradigm that allowed me to question and subvert the patriarchal system rather than reproducing it in the way I went about producing knowledge through research. The performance paradigm (as understood through a poststructural feminist lens) provided such subversive praxis.

The Performance Paradigm

> We can think through performance along three crisscrossing lines of activity and analysis. We can think of performance (1) as a work of *imagination*, as an object of study; (2) as a pragmatics of *inquiry* (both as model and method), as an optic and operator of research; (3) as a tactics of *intervention*, an alternative space of struggle. (Conquergood, 2002, p. 152)

For this study, I viewed performance as all three. Performances of gendered subjectivities were the object of the study. The performance paradigm coupled with duoethnography creates an optic for the pragmatics of the research. Our performances (especially in the public space of the blog) initiated a tactics of intervention as a "performance of possibilities" (Madison, 2012). I provide a brief overview of the

performance paradigm here and outline the specific performance theory I utilized: Alexander's (2011) theory of cultural pragmatics.

Social scientists and anthropologists have acknowledged that research, especially ethnographic research, has taken a "performative turn" in the last decade, with the focus of research shifting from "world as text" to "world as performance" (Conquergood, 1991, p. 190). An oft-cited quote by Victor Turner (1988) situates humans not as *homo sapiens,* but as *homo performans,* highlighting the importance of studying performance.

> If man is a sapient animal, a tool making animal, a self-making animal, a symbolizing animal, he is no less a performing animal, Homo performans, not in the sense, perhaps that a circus animal may be a performing animal, but in the sense that man is a self-making animal—his performances, are, in a way, reflexive; in performance he reveals himself to himself. (p. 81)

Turner's quote alludes to his understanding of performance as *poiesis,* or making culture. There are three assumptions about the work of performance: Performance as *mimesis, poiesis,* and *kinesis.* Performance as mimesis is often attributed to Aristotle, who saw performance (specifically in theater) as mimicking, imitating, or reflecting culture. "Mimesis is associated with 'faking' and falsehood—the pretend world of make-believe and play" (Bell, 2008, p. 12). Turner (1982), who brought the idea of performance out of the realm of theater and into the everyday, thought of performance not as faking but as *making* (poiesis) culture. For Turner, the ways in which we perform as women while watching *The Bachelor* actually make us as subjects and creates a certain culture of women. Finally, Conquergood (1995) suggested that performance not only had the ability to be a mimesis and a poiesis of culture, but that it could be a *kinesis*, a "breaking and remaking" of culture (Bell, 2008, p. 13). For Conquergood (1998), performance could change a culture. Performance "can transgress boundaries, break structures, and remake

social and political rules…performance can both sustain and subvert social rules" (Bell, 2008, p. 13).

Along with the work of performance, there are two other assumptions of the performance paradigm that were central to my understanding and use of it in this study. Performance is *embodied* and always associated with *power*. As Conquergood (1991) explains, "The performance paradigm privileges particular, participatory, dynamic, intimate, precarious, embodied experience grounded in historical process, contingency, and ideology" (p. 187). The groundedness of performance in ideology and historical process alludes to the power structures within which all performances are seeped. In this study, I focused on our own embodied performances as we interacted with the embodied performances of the women on the show. All of these performances were located within the current economic and political state of neoliberal capitalism. Although there are many versions of "performance theory," I chose Alexander's (2011) theory of cultural pragmatics, as it highlights the embodied nature of performance and the role of power in everyday performances. His theory also provided an accessible "script" to use as we discussed and analyzed performances surrounding the *Bachelor* technologies.

"Power is performative in every one of its hydra-headed forms" (p. 4). This idea is central to Jeffrey Alexander's (2011) line of thought. He presents a theory of cultural pragmatics in which cultural *practice* is highlighted rather than just the cultural *symbolic*. Alexander's (2011) theory of cultural pragmatics aligns well with Butler's notion of performativity and Foucault's notion of subjectivity. As Alexander rolls out the compelling grounds for cultural pragmatics and locates the modern performance somewhere between traditional ritual and strategy, it becomes clear that in thinking

through a cultural pragmatics lens, we will, in turn, also shift our notions and approaches to thinking about power.

Cultural pragmatics can be thought of as "at once, a micro theory of action theory and a macro theory of institutions and culture," which is imbedded "inside a theory of historical change, which describes deep transformations in the conditions for social performance" (Alexander, 2011, p. 82). Importantly, the conditions for social performance are always determined by the distribution of power within any society. In other words, power determines the boundaries for cultural pragmatics both internally and externally. Therefore, "not all texts are equally legitimate in the eyes of the powers that be, whether possessors of material or interpretive power. Not all performances, and not all parts of particular performance, are allowed to proceed" (Alexander, p. 32). Along with Butler (1990a, 1990b), Alexander recognizes the role that performance plays in subjectivity. "Through social performances we tell a story about ourselves to ourselves (Geertz 1973), and, because performances precipitate degrees of liminality, they are capable of transforming social relations" (Alexander, p. 20).

So, if power is performative, and if through performance we are shaped as subjects, then it is important to understand the notion of a "successful" (re-fused) vs. a "failed" (de-fused) performance and how such a thing might come about in today's modern, or, as Alexander terms it, "increasingly complex" society. I begin by giving a brief overview of the six elements of social performance, along with the concepts of fusion, de-fusion, and re-fusion. Then, I detail the concept of authenticity that is what makes scripts "work," or become believable to the audience.

Every social performance is made up of six intertwining elements: "background

representations, scripts, actors, means of symbolic production, mise-en-scene, social and interpretive power, and audiences" (Alexander, 2011, p. 103). Table 1 presents a discussion of each of these components along with an example of each as they were fleshed out in the study.

The key to a successful social performance is the fusion of the actor with the audience (which cannot happen without the fusion of the other elements as well). For example, while we watched the show, we judged whether or not a bachelorette seemed "fake," like she was performing rather than showing her "true self." When her performance appeared authentic, it was successful because she had been able to fuse the above elements. This seems simple enough. However, Alexander (2011) points out that the more "complex" a society, the more de-fused the elements of a performance become. Traditionally, in a more "simple" society, a ritual was a performance in which "the direct partners to a social interaction, and those observing it, share a mutual belief in the descriptive and prescriptive validity of the communication's symbolic contents and accept the authenticity of one another's intentions" (p. 25). The actors in the ritual played the roles that they played in life outside of the ritual space. For example, a hunter in the society would also play the role of hunter in the ritual. Therefore, the performance was fused because there was no separation between actors and roles played; the entire thing was believable to the audience (who are also actors), so much so that it was not conceived as performance at all, but instead, as a necessary and natural part of social life, thus facilitating the creation of certain roles and hierarchies in communities.

In a "complex" society imbedded with technology and industrialization, a world of increasing abstraction, actors are frequently separated from their roles in a

Table 1

Components of Alexander's (2011) theory of cultural pragmatics

Component	Alexander's (2011) description	Example in this research
Background Representations	In order for a performance to be possible, the actor must draw upon collective representations that make what they are saying and doing understandable by their audience. The words and gestures performed are "speech acts, not languages in the semiotic sense. Every speech is a play upon the variations of a background structure, the collective representations that define the symbolic references for every speech act" (p. 84).	As I sat down to watch *The Bachelor*, I poured a glass of wine for each of my girlfriends. The wine, for example, called upon background representations of a White, middle-class American view of "girls' night" and of being a "good hostess."
Scripts	The scripts in theatrical performances are "meaning primed to performance" (p. 57). However, in social performances, the script is the meaning making that the actor infers between the background representations and the audience. Scripts "allow the sense of action to be ascertained" (p. 57). Scripts, located between background representations and audiences are the lynchpin between a successful (one that appears authentic) and a failed performance (one that seems fake).	In discussing a woman's performance on the show, I said, "wow that bitch is crazy." This script allowed me to fuse my audience (girlfriends watching with me) and my performance with background representations on how it is acceptable and normalized for a woman to perform her gender.
Actors	The actor is the embodied performer. Her/his goal is to appear as if she/he is not performing, but acting "naturally." This is done by make the distinction between the separate elements discussed here disappear.	There were several layers of actors in this study. Women on the show were actors. Viewers were also actors as we performed to one another.
Means of Symbolic Production	These are the material items or "props" as Goffman (1956) called them. Props "allow symbolic projections to be made" (p. 31). Props come loaded with multiple cultural texts.	The rose was certainly a prop used within the show to allow the bachelor to make symbolic projections about his love to the women whom he either chose to keep or reject.

Table 1 continued

Component	Alexander's (2011) description	Example in this research
Mise-en-scène	"Literally 'putting into the scene'" (p. 84), in a theatrical production, this would be the work of the director and the producer. In a social performance, the mis-en-scène refers to "the temporal and spatial choreographing of the performance" (p. 32). "It is the tone of voice, the direction of the glance, the gestures of the body, the direction and intensity of the spotlighting" (p. 84).	Before the women came over to watch the show, I cleaned my house, moved the couch closer to the TV, placed the video camera at a certain angle, and made sure the light was such that we could see the TV clearly along with our wine glasses.
Social and Interpretive Power	"The distribution of power in society—the nature of its political, economic, and status hierarchies, and the relations among its elites—profoundly affects the performance process" (p. 32). Social and interpretive power shape what is possible, what is allowed to continue, what is allowed to be repeated, and what sorts of messages are intelligible. Only some actors have the authority to enact some performances.	There were multiple hierarchies in place that allow certain performances of "woman" in the space of watching the show. One of those had to do with the relationships between the viewers (us), and the level of comfort we had with one another.
Audience	"All of the above become significant only insofar as they allow or prevent meanings being successfully projected to an audience" (p. 84).	Audiences in this project were placed at various levels of removal from one another, mediated by various *Bachelor* technologies; therefore, they required different strategies for a successful performance.

performance. Performances are projected through different media, making the stage and physical locality of the audience also abstracted. Therefore, elements of a performance become de-fused. A de-fused performance can be read by the audience as artificial, contrived, fake, or inauthentic. Through the process of theater and critics, the de-fusing has also created a sort of mass suspicion or heightened awareness of the artificiality of performance. Thus, in today's society, in order for a performance to be successful, the elements of the performance, particularly actor and audience, must be re-fused.

In order for this re-fusion to take place, the concept of "authenticity" becomes central. As Pozner (2010) asserts, the producers of *The Bachelor* use a "rubric of authenticity" to convey messages to its audience. A key point to remember is that, "for cultural pragmatics, authenticity is an interpretive category rather than an ontological state" (Alexander, 2011, p. 13). Therefore, for a performance to be successful, it doesn't matter what the "reality" of the performance is; it matters whether or not the audience can believe the performance. "When felicitous performances fuse speaker and audience, these complex mediations become invisible, and audiences do not, in fact, see actions as if they are performed. We endow them with verisimilitude, so that scripted actions seem spontaneous and real" (Alexander, 2011, p. 103).

Not only is the notion of performance masked when a performance is successful and appears authentic, but so is the social power behind the performance that made it a plausible performance in the first place.

> While re-fusion is made possible only by the deposition of social power, the very success of a performance masks its existence. When performance is successful, social powers manifest themselves not as external or hegemonic forces that facilitate or oppose the unfolding performance, but merely as sign-vehicles, as means of representation, as conveyors of the intended meaning. (Alexander, 2011, p. 55)

Alexander's cultural pragmatics investigates the ways in which macro-structures and micropractices of power twist around one another with possibilities for performances of subjectivity existing in the tensions. In order to explore what sorts of possibilities exist, and what sort of power is being masked in a performance of gender, I used Alexander's elements of social performance along with his conceptualization of a successful vs. a failed performance to guide my thinking in the process of deconstructive analysis of performances of gendered subjectivities in leisure spaces of the *Bachelor* technologies.

Duoethnographic Methodology

In order to enact a multilayered study of gendered performances of women in leisure spaces surrounding television viewing, I used duoethnography as a methodology. Duoethnography is informed by the crisis of representation in qualitative research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Hammersley,1992; Lincoln & Denzin, 2000; Van Maanen, 1995), the performative turn in the social sciences (Conquergood, 1998; Denzin, 2003), and acknowledges the mediated state of today's late capitalistic society (Appadurai, 1996).

The Work of *Duo*

Duoethnography (Norris, 2008; Norris, Sawyer, & Lund, 2012; Sawyer & Norris, 2013) is a relatively new methodology that has only been used in a handful of studies. I was drawn to duoethnography because of the work of the *duo.* Just like "auto" or "critical," "duo" is a modifier that, when added to the word "ethnography," shifts how we *think* and how we *do* ethnography. The *duo* in duoethnography highlights the constructed nature of knowledge production as multiple researchers juxtapose experiences in order to

provide myriad understandings of a social phenomenon. The duo makes all parties involved "researchers," which blurs[1] the researcher/researched dichotomy.

With this idea in mind, I introduce duoethnography. I do not argue that duoethnography is some sort of infomercial "magic bullet" one-perfect-solution, but I think that the work of the *duo* provides us with another lens through which to create knowledge and multiple perspectives of a phenomenon *with* others.

In the following discussion, I will present the nine tenets of the duoethnographic methodology and highlight some of the ways in which both feminist poststructuralism and performance paradigms have influenced my thinking surrounding this methodology.

Tenet #1: Currere

The first tenet of the duoethnographic methodology deals with questions of epistemology. *Currere* refers to William Pinar's notion of viewing an individual's life as a curriculum. "Currere is an act of self-interrogation in which one reclaims one's self as one unpacks and repacks the meanings that one holds" (Norris & Sawyer, 2012, p. 13). However, this act of self-interrogation cannot take place without the assistance of the Other. In order for us to know ourselves, we must enter into a dialogic conversation with an Other. Therefore, for the duoethnographer, knowledge is contingent, fluid, and co-constructed: There is no one truth. Language is a key element in this co-construction of knowledge. For duethnographers, it is through dialogue that one comes to understand oneself. The preconceived notions or stereotypes that one holds about oneself are

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[1] I use *blurs* here rather than *dissolves* because through my experience enacting duoethnographies, there is always a power dynamic existent in the relationship between the researchers, whether that be prior research experience, commitment level, or ownership of the project. (See LeFevre, & Sawyer, 2012; Sitter, & Hall, 2012 for a discussion of this issue.)

challenged through conversation. It is through dialogue with another person, or with a cultural artifact such as a television shows that, one comes to an understanding of oneself.

Tenet #2: Polyvocal and Dialogic

The second tenet of duoethnography is that duoethnographies are always polyvocal and dialogic. They are conversations between two or more people who are simultaneously researcher and researched. Multivoiced dialogue is a site of construction of the self, Other, and culture. The dialogic theoretical premise is related to Bakhtin's (1981) notion of "heteroglossia" in which a multivoiced dialogue creates and opens possibilities for a "critical tension" (Norris & Sawyer, 2012, p. 13) between speakers and, as Norris and Sawyer (2012) point out, between artifacts of cultural media. Duoethnography's dialogic theory is heavily influenced by the performance paradigm. Conquergood (1985) presents us with "dialogic performance," where dialogue is not only heard, it is performed. Speech, for the performance theorists, is always embodied: It is smelled, touched, tasted, felt, as well as heard. It is never originary (Cole, 2010) but instead, calls upon performances and meanings that have come before it. Examples of this might be signs, symbols, and background representations that mean something politically, and have power attached to them (Alexander, 2011).

Taking Conquergood's notion one step further, Madison (2010) suggests *dialogic performative*. In changing *performance* to *performative*, Madison emphasizes, through the notion of the "speech act," that words actually *do* things, effecting physical change (Austin, 1975). Dialogue with an Other can physically change us as humans, shape our identities, and have political force on the subject. Dialogue is similar to praxis, in that it is a *doing* rather than simply a *being*.

> While on the one hand, under the overarching rubric of performance, social behavior embodies certain repetitive norms (performativity) that re-inscribe identity and belonging, thereby concretizing tradition, on the other hand social behavior also embodies behaviors that "do something" (performative) to disrupt or interrupt these repetitions to open up possibilities for alternative actions and behaviors. (Madison, 2010, p. 49)

This political and disruptive possibility of the performative is an idea that researchers have espoused. Using the words of the Appalachian folks with whom she lived for several years, Stewart (1996) explains, we write our selves into being through just sittin' and "talkin' bout thangs."

Tenet #3: Disrupts Metanarratives

Through the presentation of multiple voices in the creation of a polyvocal and dialogic narrative, a duoethnography disrupts metanarratives at the levels of culture, self, and epistemology (Norris & Sawyer, 2012). Traditionally, when one reads an academic journal article, it is wrapped up nicely with a bow: It is told through the voice of the author and ends with a conclusion, communicating one metanarrative of experience and directing the reader on what/how to think. Duoethnography, instead, juxtaposes multiple voices with the idea of resisting closure and creating an open dialogue between not only researcher and researched, but also the reader. The goal of the dialogic performance (Conquergood, 1985), as well as duoethnography, is plurality rather than a seamless metanarrative.

> The aim of dialogic performance is to bring self and other together so that they can question, debate, and challenge one another. It is a kind of performance that resists conclusions…The dialogic stance is situated in the space *between* competing ideologies. It brings self and other together even while it holds them apart. It is more like a hyphen than a period. (p. 9)

Dialogic performance, in not silencing any one voice but instead, striving to include

plurality, places the researcher in a different sort of ethical and epistemological relationship with the researched and with the reader. In recognizing the "tyranny of reductionism" (Norris & Sawyer, 2012, p. 18), duoethnography attempts to "turn knowledge into 'an act of unsettling its own natural condition' (conversation with Levinas) as power and violence in order to open it to the infinity of the other who transcends every attempt to reduce him to our totalizing grasp" (Kearney, 1984, p. 49 as cited in Norris & Sawyer, 2012, p. 18).

The issue of *voice* is also central to the way poststructural feminists present research. Lather (2001) discusses her book (Lather & Smithies, 1997) in which she and Chris Smithies spent time with women living with HIV/AIDS in order to better understand their experiences. In deciding how to write the book, their desire was to disrupt metanarratives of the ways in which women experience living with HIV/AIDS. In order to not provide an "easy read" where the reader thinks, "OK, I've got it. I understand this now," they juxtaposed their voices with the women's voices as well as with poetry, factboxes, and art in order to provide a "messy text" rather than a "comfort text" (Lather, 2001). Lather (2001) problematizes any possibility of an innocent text by troubling the feminist desire to "give voice to the voiceless" (p. 205). She suggests that any effort the researcher makes to "give voice" to a subject will always be insufficient, as subjectivities are always fluid and partial and can never be known completely. Further, she asserts that if we present the voice of the Other as whole and complete and knowable, we are doing violence to that voice by making it consumable. Instead, she suggests a "double economy of the text" in which the text both presents the Other while at the same time pointing to the insufficiency of that presentation.

> My attempt here is to defamiliarize common sentiments of voice in order to break the hegemonies of meaning and presence that recuperate and appropriate the lives of others into consumption, a too-easy, too-familiar eating of the other… Such issues can be gestured toward via a process of layering complexity and foregrounding problems: thinking data differently, outside easy intelligibility and the seductions of the mimetic in order to work against consumption and voyeurism. By working the limits of intelligibility and foregrounding the inadequacy of thought to its object, a stuttering knowledge is constructed that elicits an experience of the object through its very failures of representation. (Lather, 2007, pp. 136-137)

Therefore, in order to disrupt metanarratives, poststructural feminist work makes everything suspect. As Britzman (2000) explains:

> Those who populate and imagine it (every participant, including the author and the reader) are, in essence, textualized identities. Their voices create a cacophony and dialogic display of contradictory desires, fears, and literary tropes that, if carefully "read," suggest just how slippery speaking, writing, reading, and desiring subjectivity really are.… the authority of ethnography, the ethnographer, and the reader is always suspect. (p. 28)

The notion of creating a "cacophony" of voices, espoused by feminist poststructuralists and duoethnographers in order to disrupt the violence of a metanarrative, can also be seen as a limitation of this research methodology: There will never be a neat, clear, non-contradictory narrative. A duoethnographic will not present a linear narrative. Instead, a risky, "nomadic" inquiry" (St. Pierre, 2000) is what occurs, producing a "rhizomatic" (Deleuze & Guittari, 1987) messy web. If one is looking for truth, clarity, solutions, singular meaning, or bows, duoethnography will not produce such results.

Tenet #4: Difference

The fourth tenet of the duoethnographic methodology is the focus on the difference between duoethnographers, which is expected in order to provide multiple perspectives of a phenomenon. Therefore, when choosing co-researchers, the goal is for duoethnographers to be different enough to create juxtapositions in order to provide

readers with "theses and antitheses" so that the reader can form her or his own "syntheses" and keep the text open (Norris & Sawyer, 2012). Duoethnographers have explored experiences of the same phenomenon with differences between the duoethnographers consisting of sexual orientation (Norris & Sawyer, 2004), social class (Rankie, Shelton, & McDermott, 2012), place of birth (Navabi & Lund, 2012), and life experiences (Sitter & Hall, 2012), among others.

Tenet #5: Dialogic Change and Regenerative Transformation

Because the research process is both dialogic and embodied, the researcher is deeply embedded in the research and is changed as a result of her participation in the study. In entering into a dialogic position with another duoethnographer, in seeing each other's lives as *currere*, the researcher takes a different sort of ethical position to the researched than is taken in traditional ethnographic research. The researcher must become vulnerable, "baring her breasts" as feminist researchers Behar and Gordon (1995) challenge us to do. Villenas (2000) takes a similar position of vulnerability when she, as a Xicana mother and ethnographer, studies Latino mothers. She explains that she is caught between and against the colonizer/colonized dichotomy as she, a member of an oppressed culture yet in a privileged location of the university, studies a group of Latino mothers. She acknowledges her role as "co-constructor and co-performer" in the sense-making process, thus making herself vulnerable and baring her own breasts through sharing her stories with the women and with the reader.

Madison (2010), in her discussion of the dialogic performative, suggests that dialogue is a sort of activism in which both parties in the conversation are actively making themselves and carving out new political possibilities through the ways in which

they are performing in such a space. An important piece of the dialogic performative, in order for the enactment of change as suggested in the duoethnographic methodology to occur, is the notion of embodiment. In the leisure literature, Johnson (2005, 2008) and Johnson and Samdahl (2005), influenced by feminist theory post-"crisis of representation," explored the embodied performances of gay men in the leisure space of a country-western gay bar. Johnson and Samdahl (2005) discussed the ways in which male performances could be read as misogynistic, upholding a hegemonic male-female dualism as they resisted Lesbian night at the bar.

Lather (1986) presented the concept of "research as praxis," which she describes as participatory research that seeks "emancipatory knowledge." Both Lather and Norris and Sawyer point poststructural feminists and duoethnographers towards Friere's (1971) "conscientization." The emancipatory knowledge that the researcher doing research as praxis seeks, and the dialogic change and regenerative transformation that the duoethnographer seeks both work towards conscientization. The idea is that the researcher enters into the research with a level of reciprocity and vulnerability that opens her up to examining her own "stuck" beliefs along with those of the Other. Through self-reflection and the act of dialogic performativity, both researcher and researched collectively seek emancipatory knowledge, which "increases awareness of the contradictions hidden or distorted by everyday understandings, and in doing so it directs attention to the possibilities for social transformation" (Lather, 1986, p. 259).

The dialogical research process in which the researcher is immersed and situated within a community as co-performer is consistent with what Delgado-Gaitan (1993) refers to as an "Ethnography of Empowerment." In an Ethnography of Empowerment, the

researcher's relationship to the researched is that of co-constructor, concurrently participating in a change in a community and, in turn, creating change in themselves. The fundamental premises that structure an Ethnography of Empowerment are that "learning among humans occurs across cultures and…learning ideally is purposive, and should ultimately be directed to the enhancement of cultural values" (p. 392). This tenet of duoethnography provided a political way to enact change through a dialogical performative with the women watching *The Bachelor* by opening up possibilities for new performances.

Tenet #6: Trustworthiness Found in Self-Reflexivity, Not Validity and Truth Claims

Rather than validity, duoethnography relies upon self-reflexivity of the researchers to build trustworthiness of the data for the reader. Reflexivity is a method often used in feminist research, though even the innocence implicit in reflexivity has been troubled within feminist poststructural work (Pillow, 2003). Because duoethnographies portray knowledge that is fluid, in transition, transformative, and dialogic, both truth and validity become irrelevant (Norris & Sawyer, 2012). "What exists is the rigor of the collaborative inquiry that is made explicit in the duoethnography itself.…The believability and trustworthiness of the research is found in the depth of researcher involvement with and accompanying praxis related to her study" (p. 20). Rather than using validity as a measure to judge whether or not the duoethnography I write is "any good," I invite readers to think about the following criteria, which I have adopted from Richardson's (2000) criteria for assessing Creative Analytic Practice (CAP). I engaged CAP as a way of analyzing the data (see the data analysis section for more discussion on

CAP).

- Is it evocative and impactful, does it move the reader to feel/think/question/write/act?
- Does it make a contribution to "our *understanding* of social life?" (p. 937)
- Does the piece express an embodied sense of realities?
- Is the author reflexive, does the text account for the ways in which it was produced?
- Is the piece aesthetically pleasing (artistic and not boring)? "Does the use of creative analytic practices open up the text, invite interpretive responses?" (p. 937).

Tenet #7: Audience Accessibility

In enacting the previous six tenets through the written final report, duoethnographers strive to show and tell stories in ways in which the audience can participate by adding their own stories into the juxtaposed and contradictory narratives of the authors. Instead of ending with a conclusion or a set of conclusions, the stories are purposefully left open so that those that are reading can continue to write them (Norris & Sawyer, 2012). Offering closure or hard conclusions do not allow for such participation. Therefore, as a form of praxis, it is important that duoethnographies are written in a way that is accessible to a specific audience that might be broader than that of an academic journal.

Tenet #8: Ethical Stances and Tenet #9: Trust

While Norris and Sawyer (2012) present these tenets as two separate entities, I present them together here because I see them as inextricably intertwined. For Norris and Sawyer, without trust, "disclosure is withheld, preventing a rich discussion of the phenomenon under investigation" (p. 23). The ethical stance the researchers take with one another is *simultaneously* teacher and student. "They regard each other as both their teacher and student, assisting the Other in the making of meaning and receptive to the Other in reconceptualizing their own meanings" (p. 21).

In acknowledging the power of dialogue to write the researcher as well as the researched into being, duoethnographies position the researcher and the researched as "coperformers" (Conquergood, 1991). With this shift in relationship also comes a tremendous level of trust as both parties become vulnerable to one another and learn from each other through forming a relationship. "Duoethnographies elude the researcher/researched dichotomy that situates the Other as a subject to be talked about. Duoethnographies are conversations that position the Other in dialogue" (Norris, & Sawyer, 2012, p. 21). My aim was, therefore, to co-author the duoethnographic accounts in this dissertation with my fellow duoethnographers.

In a power move that (re)locates the Other within dialogue *and as author*, a radical form of collective research emerges. Feminist ethnographers have actively critiqued the knowledge-forming process of "traditional" ethnographic work (cf. Pillow & Mayo, 2012; Tedlock, 1991; Viseweswaran, 1997). They have utilized creative methods and ways of writing that strive to actively include the voices of the subjects with whom they study (cf. Berbary, 2011; Lather & Smithies, 1997; Parry & Johnson, 2007;

Richardson, 2004; Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005; Stewart, 1996), they have included strategies such as member checking (Guba & Lincoln, 1985) to include the voices of their subjects in the project. However, the lone feminist ethnographer generally does the majority of the writing, and her name ends up as the sole author under the name of the title of her book, paper, or journal article. Even when conducting autoethnographies, scholars are never lone ethnographers, as meaning is never made in a vacuum and we are never lone writers of knowledge. Thus, the "duo" points to this, and challenges researchers to actively write pieces with their "subjects," blurring the line between subject and object, knower and known, and giving credit to the constructed nature of the knowledge process.

Duoethnography allows for an in-depth relational investigation that promotes an unsure and nervous performative understanding of the experiences of women in the leisure spaces surrounding reality television. The performance paradigm coupled with a duoethnographic methodology calls for a troubling of the writing process that keeps the text open, encouraging readers to continue the dialogue.

Methods

There is no one prescribed set of methods for performing duoethnographic inquiry. Instead of strict guidelines, Norris of Sawyer (2012) present us with broad recommendations for creating a "living method" (Sawyer & Norris, 2013,) which is flexible as the project progresses:

1. Methods should generate stories

   Stories are accessible. They are one of the fundamental forms in which we communicate to each other on a daily basis. Methods should generate rich, detailed, informal, stories so that others can easily connect with one's experiences.

2. Data generation and data writing are not separate activities.
   When one goes about analyzing data, something is always lost. The coding process is always reductionist and a mediated. Thus, the data collection and the data representation are always splices and never exist exactly as the data were performed.
3. Methods should aim to produce Geertz's (1973) ethnographic "thick description."
   The goal is to show the reader as well as tell the reader. "Duoethnographies are more than stories; they also blend in analysis….Duoethnographers, throughout their texts, work on balancing the expression (showing) with explanation (telling)" (Norris & Sawyer, 2012, p. 33).
4. Methods should encourage juxtaposed conversations.
   As dialogue is the foundation of duoethnography, the methods chosen should attempt to create a space for open conversation as well as constructive listening.
5. Methods should encourage "transparency."[2]
   A brilliant example of a way of doing this is shown in Breault, Hackler, and Bradley's (2012) duoethnography in which they utilize a website and hypertexts to present raw data along with analysis in order to give the reader an audit trail. Their website is http://breaultresearch.info.

I kept these broad guidelines in mind as I chose methods that generated polyvocal, reflexive narratives of lived experience.

Participants

The main focus of this duoethnography was the performances of three avid self-identified female *Bachelor* fans. In line with duoethnographic methodology, and the feminist notion that a researcher cannot separate herself out objectively from that which (or of whom) she is studying, I was one of the subjects. I selected the other two women, Rose and Bobbie (the women chose to go by their names) because they were fans and had watched *The Bachelor* for several seasons, they both had experience in academia with research and writing (which is helpful in the collective writing call of duoethnography),

[2] I recognize the limitations (and potential violence) of the idea of transparency. See chapter VI for a discussion of failure, vulnerability, and transparency in the research process.

we significantly differed in our life experiences (which is valued in duoethnography) and we shared collective interest[3] in exploring these research questions. Utilizing questions asked of this season's bachelorettes by ABC (available online at http://abc.go.com/shows/the-bachelor/bios), below are our participant bios.

Settings

As this was a transmedia study, the settings included multiple levels of mediated leisure spaces (*The Bachelor* technologies). Online ethnographers (Markham 1998, 2003, 2005), virtual ethnographers (Hine, 2000), global technographers (Kien, 2009), elfnographers (Holt, 2011), cyberethnographers (Gajjala, 2002), and netnographers (Kozinets, 2010) assert that in today's historical mediated moment of modernity, it is impossible to understand a culture thoroughly without looking at both online and offline representations of that culture. With this in mind, in this study, there were multiple layers of setting. I called them layers because the settings overlap. The way in which we made meaning of *The Bachelor* occurred across several settings, sometimes simultaneously. For example, we were sitting in my living room, watching the show (see Figure 2), Googling information about a bachelorette, and receiving texts about the show from a friend 1,000 miles away.

These layers included:

- The physical offline leisure environment of the viewing space of my living room.
- The leisure setting of reading gossip magazines.

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[3] While we may have shared a "collective" interest, the levels of "buy-in" varied because of different levels of commitment to the project (it was my dissertation) and because of desired outcomes of participation.

		
Bobbie Age: 38 Occupation: Psychotherapist **What is your most embarrassing moment?** Ummm….when my skirt dropped in front of several hundred of my peers during a high school play. Chang-chang-changity-chang-shoo-bop! **Would you consider yourself adventurous or conservative?** Way Adventuresome!!!!!!! ...with a partner who keeps me balanced ;) **What was your college experience like?** Way different than the average college experience! I went to a Mennonite College! I traveled in the Middle East, learned about humility, peace and a belief in service to others.	Rose Age: 29 Occupation: Ph.D. Student **Do you consider yourself a good cook?** I don't know about good, but I do LOVE to cook. Most recent endeavors are healthy baked egg rolls, delicious. **What is your favorite memory from your childhood?** My dad built my brother and I this cardboard box maze that took up the whole basement level of the house, we used to turn the lights off and crawl around with flashlights trying to scare each other, more often I got scared. **What is the most romantic present you have ever given? Why?** I made a memory jar for Christmas this year so that my boyfriend and I can look back at all the amazing fun things we will get to do in 2013. I think in a relationship it is so important to cherish and celebrate your time together, this will help us remember those times.	Callie Age: 30 Occupation: Ph.D. Student **Would you say that you are more of a country or more of a city person?** Country girl all the way! I have a hopeless addiction to boots and in the words of some of my favorite country singers, I like "wide open spaces." I like a man who will "take me home, country roads," and who knows that "a country girl can survive!" **If you could have lunch with one person, who would it be and why?** Slavoj Zizek. The man is brilliant, unpredictable, and sassy. Have you seen his video comparing Gangnam Style to Justin Beiber? I would love to hear what he thinks about this show! **How long does it take you to get ready for a big night out on the town?** A hot minute.

Figure 2. Coresearchers

- The online leisure environment of social media, specifically, Facebook and Twitter.
- The online leisure environment of a public blog that was created for the purposes of this study.

Methods of Data Generation

Overview

The methods of data generation for this study were informed by a pilot study during the 16th season of *The Bachelor* in 2012. The data collection methods from that study were evaluated, expanded, and improved upon for the purposes of this study. The following presents a linear overview.

Every Monday night beginning January 7, 2013 and for the 12 weeks that the season aired, Rose and Bobbie came to my house from 7:00pm to 9:00pm to watch *The Bachelor*. We enjoyed beverages of our choosing (alcoholic or not) and had dinner while watching the show. We had a designated driver arranged for anyone who wished to consume alcoholic beverages. We video recorded ourselves watching the show each week. Rather than keeping field notes in a private diary, we posted our observations and reflections of the show each week on a public blog site, www.blogaboutthebachelor.com, which was created for the purpose of this study. Through word of mouth (Facebook, twitter, email, or verbal communication), we invited others who watched the show to visit our blog and join the conversation. Each week, if images from the show made the cover of any gossip magazine, I procured copies of the magazines for Rose, Bobbie, and myself as another piece of the story given to us by the multiple *Bachelor* technologies. At the conclusion of the show, we reconvened to watch the video footage of ourselves watching

the show. We video recorded our conversations and performances of watching our own performances and took copious notes during the 25 hours of watching.

There were three layers of performance that acted as data generation points. Each layer of performance pertained directly to a research question (RQ).

1. The women on the TV show were performing a certain notion of woman to us as audience members.

   RQ: How do women watching *The Bachelor* view constructions of women within the show? [performance one]

2. We, as audience members, were consuming these performances and then performing certain notions of woman to one another both in the space of the living room and in an online public blog. As we reflected upon our experiences publically (in the form of a blog), we were then performing woman through our online presentations of self to a public audience.

   RQ: How do women perform their own womanhood in relation to multiple performances within physical viewing spaces and media outlets (*The Bachelor* technologies)? [performance two]

3. As a reflexive twist, we watched a recording of our performance while watching the show. As we reflected upon and reacted to our performances, we, at times, reflexively shifted the ways in which we performed our gender.

   RQ: What is revealed when women reflexively watch their own gendered performances? [performance three]

The three performances and the methods used to generate data in each performance are outlined below.

Performance One: Watching the Show

The first performance we studied was the performance of us as viewers watching the show and reacting to the women's performances within the show. The goal in studying this performance was to address the research question: How do women watching the Bachelor view constructions of women within the show? In order to create archival recordings of this performance, we did two things. We recorded our performances of viewing the show using a digital camcorder. The camera was set up behind the couch where all three of us were seated (in order to catch the image of the show and the verbal dialogue). The videotapes provided access to our performances and aided us in a further layer of analysis of our performances. We also obtained a digital copy of all of the episodes in the season for future reference as we discussed and analyzed data. We recognized that the ways in which we read the performances of the women within the show occurred because of our interactions with several of the Bachelor technologies. Therefore, we also read gossip magazines (which I bought copies of when The Bachelor made headlines), visited ABC's website, and chatted with our friends on Facebook about the show. We often brought these outside sources into our conversation while watching the show. This method correlated with duoethnographic tenets numbers one, two, and five.

Performance Two: Blogging about the Show

In this performance, Bobbie, Rose, and I had already consumed the show and performed as gendered subjects in the space of the living room. We had reflected on both the women's performances to us within the show, our own performance of woman in the viewing space, and each other's performances as gendered subjects within the physical

viewing space. We then reflected upon those experiences and performed as gendered subjects to other viewers through our reflections within a public blog space. On the blog, we, in a sense, performed as stars of our own reality television show. This layer corresponded with research question #2: How do women perform their own womanhood in relation to multiple performances within physical viewing spaces and media outlets (*The Bachelor* technologies)?

During the week between shows, Rose, Bobbie, and I reflected upon both our perceptions of the women's performances within the show, and upon our own performances as gendered subjects. We posted these reflections to an online blog located within a website created specifically for the purpose of this study. The address of the blog was www.blogaboutthebachelor.com. Both prior to and throughout the study, the three of us invited our friends to join in on the conversation within the blog. We used multiple word of mouth strategies such as Facebook status update "sales pitches" with links to the blog website, personal conversation, and phone calls/texts to friends. The blog produced a digital archive of dialogue among the three of us and whoever chose to join. This method addressed the call of duoethnographers for collective and dialogic writing of the experience.

Performance Three: Watching Ourselves Watch

In this layer, Rose, Bobbie, and I spent a long weekend watching the 24 + hours of video footage of ourselves watching the show. In this footage, we were rewatching the performances of the women on the show, and watching our own performances. We typed notes, paused, and rewound the footage when needed for reflective conversation. Watching ourselves watch was also a performance. We were, in a sense, watching a

reality TV show in which we were the stars. Therefore, in addition, we video recorded this performance. Playing off Dubrofsky (2011), we were doing the work of watching ourselves watching others being watched. This layer corresponds to the final research question: What is revealed when women reflexively watch their own gendered performances?

Ethical Considerations

As trust is a key element in the duoethnographic process, in order for Rose, Bobbie, and I to enter into an "ethical pedagogical relationship with one another" (Norris and Sawyer, 2012, p. 20) so that we viewed each other reciprocally as both teacher and student, ethical considerations were paramount to the success of this dissertation.

Prior to the beginning of the season, Rose, Bobbie and I met in order to discuss the study outline and how we planned to negotiate issues of trust and privacy, particularly in conversations with other women, and most importantly, within the public space of the blog. We discussed choices of pseudonyms, and how we planned on handling conversations about the study with women that we knew both professionally and personally, among other issues that may come up for each of us. During this meeting, I shared the IRB consent cover letter (Appendix B), copies of chapters from books of theorists that are heavily influencing my thinking around this study, and posed several questions (Appendix C).

This conversation was audio-recorded with a digital audio recorder. These conversations occurred several times both during and after the study. Whenever we had these conversations (whether in person or over email), a recording of the conversation was made (in the form of an audio recording, video recording, research notes, or email)

and kept as data, giving us another layer in the complexity of how we were performing as gendered subjects, and as duoethnographers in these leisure settings.

Data Analysis

In analyzing the data generated throughout this study, I neither coded, nor created themes. I instead watched the videos, read (both data and the literature), thought, reread, thought, rewatched, wrote and rewrote. I created more data as I repeatedly looped through this process. It is worth quoting Elizabeth St. Pierre (2011) at length, as her understanding of *data* and *analysis* were formative in my thinking.

> I expect we teach coding because we don't know how to teach thinking. But I will always believe that if one has read and read and read, it's nigh onto impossible not to think with what others have thought and written (If one has not read much, perhaps one needs to code). I imagine a cacophony of ideas swirling as we think about our topics with all we can muster—with words from theorists, participants, conference audiences, friends and lovers, ghosts who haunt our studies, characters in fiction and film and dreams—and with our bodies and all the other bodies and the earth and all the things and objects in our lives—the entire assemblage that is *a life* thinking *and, and, and*....All those data are set to work in our thinking, and we think, and we work our way somewhere in thinking. My advice is to read, and analysis, whatever it is, will follow. (*Do tell me what you think you are thinking with when you think—what are your data? And do tell me what you do when you think—when you do analysis? Do that.)* In the end, it is impossible to disentangle *data, data collection,* and *data analysis*. Those individuations no longer make sense. We could just give them up. (p. 621)

When answering St. Pierre's call to "tell what I do when I think," I located my thinking around analysis with Creative Analytic Practice (CAP) and deconstruction.

Creative Analytic Practice

Because the facets of one's lived experience of leisure are so complex, leisure scholars have recently suggested CAP as a way to analyze such experiences richly (Berbary, 2008, 2011; Parry & Johnson, 2007). Aside from CAP being a creative way of

representing data and inviting the reader into the experience, CAP is also a mode of analysis in which the author gains an understanding of herself and the phenomenon through the writing process. Richardson and St. Pierre (2005) argue that the traditional research model is itself "a sociohistorical invention that reifies the static social world imagined by our nineteenth century foreparents" (p. 517). For them, the modern qualitative research experience is not consistent with this structured form of writing. Not only does the traditional model make qualitative pieces uninteresting to read, it also "requires writers to silence their own voices and to view themselves as contaminants" (p. 517).

Conquergood (1991, 2002) asks us to think of ways of presenting research that are not "textocentric" forms of data representation. He suggests that we recognize the flattening that written texts do to experiences and think through other ways to do scholarly representation of data to invoke audio, visual, and felt ways of knowing and telling.

Deconstructing Performance

Although neither the performance paradigm nor the duoethnographic methodology employ a specific "method" of data "analysis,"[4] poststructural ideas of deconstruction provided a starting point through which I enacted data analysis. Différance is Derrida's (1976, 1982) concept that deliberately plays etymologically with

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[4] I place *method* and *analysis* in quotation marks here in order to acknowledge that in calling deconstruction a method of analysis, I have caused Derrida to shiver, as he specifically asserts that deconstruction is not a method of analysis in the traditional sense of these two words. When I call deconstruction a method of analysis I use the words *method* and *analysis* loosely, in the Latherian transgressive and messy sense. I assert, along with Derrida, that deconstruction does not offer us a calculated linear formulaic way of analyzing data, but it provides us with a way to continually destabilize normalized meanings.

the word difference. Différance and deconstruction are two key ideas in poststructuralist analysis. For Derrida (1982), the meaning of any word within a linguistic system only makes sense as it is different from that which it is not. For example, the meaning of "woman" is understood in that it is not "man" "girl," "lady," "female," or "animal." Its meaning is always slippery and always deferred in relation to the meanings of other words, which are always constructed within certain power institutions in certain contexts and at certain periods of time. In deconstructing and making categories such as "man" and "woman" slippery, différance begins to tear apart hierarchical and binary relationships between categories of unequal power. The either/or becomes more of a both/and.

So, therefore, deconstruction as a method of data analysis troubles the mainstream, asserted meaning of a certain word, thus opening up other possibilities for performances of something such as "woman." Butler (1992) explains the role of deconstruction in the feminist political project of opening up new possibilities:

> To deconstruct the subject of feminism is not, then, to censure its usage, but, on the contrary, to release the term into a future of multiple significations, to emancipate it from the maternal or racist ontologies to which it has been restricted, and to give it play as a site where unanticipated meanings might come to bear. (p. 16)

The way in which deconstruction opens up possibilities is through placing notions of gender, for example, under "erasure." Derrida instructs us to draw a line through the notion of, for example, "woman" in order to destabilize and put into question our cultural meanings surrounding woman and what sorts of power dynamics the normalized understanding of the word call into play. Once woman is under erasure, there are other ways that we can conceive of performing as a woman that can then fall within the realm

of the intelligible and, thus, recognizable.

Richardson (1997) provides an example of deconstruction in action as she tells multiple autobiographical stories of what it means to live an academic life. Interspersed with conversation on theory, she uses deconstruction to open up the boundaries or limits of what counts as academic discourse. Similarly, Visweswaran (1994) uses deconstruction to place the notion of the all-knowing feminist ethnographer under erasure along with sure attempts to represent the Other. Her deconstruction leads her instead towards a betrayal of ways of representation. She instead wants us to be "trickster" ethnographers who are aware of the ways in which our efforts to represent betray us and instead espousing the "as if" rather than the "as" (p. 112) as a form of ethnographic agency in which no one subjectivity of the researcher or researched is ever nailed down.

Spivak (1988) details a "formula" for how deconstruction works. "Deconstruction, if one wants a formula, is among other things, a persistent critique of what one cannot not want" (p. 28). I include this here because of the last phrase, a *persistent critique* of what one *cannot not* want. Persistent critique points to the previous tenet of the duoethnographic methodology: disrupting metanarratives. Metanarratives are not disrupted once, but must be put under erasure repeatedly: In duoethnography, this occurs through the dialogic performance in which dialogue of contradictory voices is juxtaposed and closure is actively resisted. The last phrase, what one *cannot not want,* is key when one is researching a "guilty pleasure" such as watching "trashy" television. Even though I am aware of the stereotypes that are perpetuated within performances privileged on *The Bachelor*, I cannot not want to watch it and, at times, I cannot not want to perform in ways that uphold oppressive norms. Therefore, I employed deconstruction

to destabilize the power structures that keep a normalized view of woman in place.

Overview of Articles

I see the results of this dissertation as making two contributions. First, the blog itself was a public performance in which we provided a space for women to react to, critique, support, or decenter messages sent by the show and one another. As such, the blog enacted a political project in order to decenter norms of practice offering more possibilities for gendered performance. In addition to this public political project, the results of our study as presented in five articles within this dissertation provide a methodological contribution to the body of knowledge by exploring what it means to do "empowering" "collaborative" feminist research. The ways in which we performed gendered subjectivities in reaction to messages sent by *The Bachelor* were inextricably entangled with the ways in which we performed gendered subjectivities as collaborative researchers. The first article models duoethnography as a methodology that can be used to explore experiences of femininity in leisure spaces. The second is a response to a question posed at a presentation of the dissertation research at a conference. In it, we (Karen Paisley and I) question what "empowerment" means and whether or not it should be a goal of feminist leisure research. In the third article, Rose, Bobbie, Anita, and I explore our performances of "girl code" throughout the research process. In the fourth article, I focus on the failures of our research project in order to (re)think the promises of collaborative feminist research. Finally, the fifth article acts as a conclusion to the dissertation, but is a nonconclusion of sorts in which I challenge the need to offer pragmatic solutions in leisure research.

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CHAPTER III

ARTICLE I: TWO WOMEN, A BOTTLE OF WINE, AND *THE BACHELOR:* DUOETHNOGRAPHY AS A MEANS TO EXPLORE EXPERIENCES OF FEMININITY IN A LEISURE SETTING

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Two Women, a Bottle of Wine, and *The Bachelor*

Duoethnography as a Means to Explore Experiences of Femininity in a Leisure Setting

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University of Utah

Abstract

Callie: Isn't the purpose of an abstract similar to that of the *The Bachelor* show intro...to sucker you into reading the rest of the paper?

Karen: Yep, and I am not quite sure how to sell something like this in 120 words. *The Bachelor* does it well with sex scenes, enticing images of stunningly beautiful women on exotic vacations with a typically shirtless man, and scandalous scenes of women fighting and crying.

Callie: OK, so since our paper is about us using duoethnography to explore our experiences of femininity within the leisure space of watching *The Bachelor*, how do we make that sound sexy and fun enough for people to keep reading?

Karen: Well, we could include this conversation…

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Host: *This week on* The Bachelor, *we will meet Callie and Karen, the two women who have agreed to participate on this journey. And believe me, it will be a juicy season…*

[Camera cuts to a clip of Callie and Karen watching the show.]

Callie: That sash makes you look insane, the hat's alright, and the grandma…kinda cute.

Karen: Bunny-boiler, nut job, and what is a "blogger?"

Callie: Bad teeth! Get her outta here!

Karen: A "VIP cocktail waitress?" What's that? Just say "lap dancer." It's so bad.

Karen: You know "bimbo model" is in.

Callie: I think that "sobbing girl in the bathroom" is in.

Callie: This is upsetting [in a joking tone].

Both: [hilariously giggling]

[Camera cuts back to the host.]

Host: *We'll get an insider's look as they prepare themselves to begin their first evening of research. We asked Callie and Karen the same questions that we ask the bachelorettes for their bios, and we'll now reveal their responses. Let's meet Callie, a Ph.D. student from Staunton, VA, and Karen, a University Professor from Tarrytown, NY.*

Callie, 30, Ph.D. Student

Hometown: Staunton, VA

Favorite memory from your childhood?
Picking blackberries, building forts, and exploring with my brothers.

Do you consider yourself athletic?
Yes, I enjoy basketball, running, biking, and snowboarding.

Do you consider yourself romantic and why?
Absolutely. I love the idea of being gray (even though I will probably dye my hair till I die) and sitting on the porch telling stories with the man who shared life with me.

Tattoo Count:
1

What is your ideal mate's personality like?
Great sense of humor, spontaneous, adventuresome, witty, intelligent.

Karen, 41, University Professor

Hometown: Tarrytown, NY

Favorite memory from your childhood? Playing "mountain goat" on sunny afternoons (hiking, climbing rocks, wading through streams) and getting filthy!

Do you consider yourself athletic?
Active? Yes. Athletic? Not even close…too uncoordinated and non-competitive.

Do you consider yourself romantic and why?
Yes…am a sucker for happily-ever-after love stories. Awwwwww….

Tattoo Count:
1

What is your ideal mate's personality like?
Authentic. 'Nuff said. More? Patient, bright/interesting, giving/concerned for others, fun.

Duoethnographic Tenet One

Difference: "The difference between duoethnographers is not only encouraged but also expected. …Through the articulation of such differences, duoethnographers make explicit how different people can experience the same phenomenon differently. In addition, such a juxtaposition of difference aids in keeping the text open. Readers are provided with theses and antitheses and the reader can form their own syntheses" (Norris & Sawyer, 2012, pp. 17-18).

Host: *Our journey this week will take us to the "inner sanctum" of Karen's house, the site where these women begin the duoethnography of their experience of watching ABC's TV show,* The Bachelor.

[Camera zooms in on Karen in a red 3-button jacket over a white dress shirt paired with her "good jeans" and silver flats. Her chin-length blonde hair is tussled as she furiously tidies her basement bedroom. Wielding cleaning implements in both hands, she multitasks dusting, vacuuming, and stashing stray shoes and clothes. Profound confusion on her face, she fumbles the video camera out of its box and tries all angles of attaching it to the tri-pod. Success! She balances it on the denim blue oversized ottoman and plays with angles in which both her flat screen TV, about six feet away on the wall, and the backs of their heads will be visible in the recording.]

[Camera cuts to Callie's bedroom. She sports black yoga pants, running shoes, and a white fleece tunic. She frowns disapprovingly in the mirror and disappears into her closet to emerge in a pair of dark-wash skinny jeans, boots, and a red cashmere sweater. Much better.]

[Camera follows Callie into her kitchen. She is holding a bottle of "two buck chuck" red wine with a pensive look on her face. She returns it to the cupboard, notices the clock on the stove, and bolts from the house. In the next shot, she wears the same worried look on her face, but this time is standing in front of racks of wine at the local liquor store. Unable to make a choice, she grabs a couple $10 bottles with stylish-looking labels and dashes to her Honda Element to make it to Karen's house on time.]

Commercial Break

Commercial One: Duoethnography

On January 2, 2012, ABC aired the first episode of the sixteenth season of the TV show, *The Bachelor*. It was a wildly successful show; millions of viewers tuned in to watch the action for two juicy hours every Monday night for 12 weeks. We were two of those millions. As white heterosexual women in the viewer age range demographic of 25-54, we epitomize the show's target audience. Utilizing duoethnography, we videotaped ourselves watching each episode of *The Bachelor*, wrote reflections on each Monday night's experience, and then spent a long weekend rewatching and taking notes on the 25 hours of video footage of ourselves watching *The Bachelor.* The purpose of our study was to interrogate how we perform femininity in the leisure setting of watching *The Bachelor*. Specifically, how does that experience write us as women and how do we, in turn, write culture by writing each other and ourselves? This paper is not about presenting results from our study, per se, but about inviting readers (by modeling) to assess duoethnography as a tactic to address the aims of third wave feminism, namely to reject universalist claims of a "common" or shared experience of "women," as a collective.

As feminist researchers, we chose duoethnography because it overlays well with feminist research praxis. Reinharz (1992) discusses feminist ethnography as aligning well with three goals of feminist research: "(1) to document the lives and activities of women, (2) to understand the experience of women from their own point of view, (3) to conceptualize women's behavior as an expression of social contexts" (p. 51). Duoethnography is a form of ethnography in which researchers investigate a phenomenon (the leisure experience of women watching *The Bachelor*) through the use of themselves (through reflexivity and dialogue with the other researcher) in order to create a multivocal and critical understanding that ticks all three of these boxes. Norris and Sawyer (2012) identified nine tenets of duoethnography that we present throughout the paper in the sidebar beside exemplars from our data and experiences.

Commercial Two: The Leisure Experience of Watching Reality TV

Within leisure studies, experiences of viewing reality TV have been overlooked as sites for cultural inquiry although leisure scholars are uniquely positioned to advance research into such spaces. To the extent that doing so is freely chosen and rewarding in some way, watching television, reality television or otherwise, can certainly be a leisure experience. Not only that, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, it is a highly popular everyday "leisure" experience. Their 2010 American Time Use Survey reported that the average American spends about 2.7 hours a day watching television, which accounts for about half of her/his leisure time (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2011). However, there is relative silence in the leisure literature around the topic of watching television, in general (cf. Durrant & Kennedy, 2007; Hirschman, 1985; Rhodes & Dean, 2009; Wachter & Kelly, 1998). Scant attention has been paid to watching reality TV, in particular, and the social phenomena of watching with others.

Outside of the leisure literature, however, viewer experiences of reality TV has appeared as a growing topic of research. Articles and books in Communication, Sociology, and New Media Studies have explored topics such as viewer and participant performativity, gender dynamics, audience views and experiences of "reality," and audience and participant surveillance and consumption (cf. Andrejevic, 2004; Barton, 2009; Brown, 2005; Couldry, 2008; Ferris, Smith, Greenberg, & Smith, 2007; Gray, 2009; Hautakangas, 2010; Hill, 2002, 2005; Roberti, 2007). Much of this research has adopted a feminist lens to explore reality television (cf. Mendible, 2004; Cato & Carpentier, 2010; Fairclough, 2004; Graham-Bertolini, 2004). There are also a small group of scholars looking specifically at the reality TV show, The Bachelor (cf. Bonsu, Darmody, & Parmentier, 2010; Brophy-Baermann, 2005; Dubrofsky, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2009, 2011; Dubrofsky & Hardy, 2008; Yep & Camacho, 2004). Through a feminist lens, these authors have suggested that reality TV "bites back" (Pozner, 2010) and have challenged us to critically examine the ways in which we engage with reality TV.

Pozner (2010) reads reality television shows, such as *The Bachelor*, as "our prime purveyor of…cultural hegemony….media is largely responsible for how we know what we know. In other words, media shape what we think of as 'the truth' about 'the way things are'" (p. 97). For Pozner, the truths that reality television teaches us about women include the following:

- Women are bitches.
- Women are stupid.
- Women are incompetent at work and failures at home.
- Women are gold diggers (p. 97).

Pozner critiques what she thinks is a shallow interaction that most American viewers have with reality TV. "Too often what passes for discussion about reality TV is limited to 'Wow, that bitch was crazy!'…We need a deeper debate in this country about the meaning and implications of reality TV's backlash against women's rights and social progress" (Pozner, 2010, p. 17).

Dubrofsky (2011) takes up Andrejevic's (2004) question, "What is the work of being watched?" Specifically, her book addresses surveillance on what she refers to as "The Bachelor Industry," which consists of the package of ABC's *Bachelor* programs (*The Bachelor*, *The Bachelorette*, and *The Bachelor Pad*). For Dubrofsky, The Bachelor Industry privileges compulsory heterosexuality and whiteness, and normalizes certain versions of "woman," specifically, a certain type of emotional state (not crazy, or too emotional, but also open enough to find love), and a certain type of body (generally thin, stylish, and with flawless skin) that is deemed beautiful. In

the final chapter of her book, Dubrofsky (2011), after thoroughly exploring the question, "What is the work of being watched?," poses the following question: "What is the work of watching others being watched?" (p. 127).

While Dubrofsky enacted a beautiful feminist analysis of The Bachelor Industry, it is her parting question that fascinates us. Most of the literature surrounding reality television in general deals with the ways in which women are portrayed on the shows and what sorts of messages are created for women watching the show. This work takes a critical, but etic, perspective on the messages created for women by the producers, advertisers, and other generators of the show. What these studies lack, however, is an emic perspective of the experience of women watching reality TV: Acknowledging the fact that surveillance exists does not provide insight into its "consumption" by women (individually or in groups) or any agency or cognizance of women viewers. Current research has not conducted an emic analysis of the ways in which women interact with those messages, whether it be in degrees of resistance, reproduction, or oblivion.

Commercial Three: Studying Women's Leisure in the Third Wave of Feminism

Feminist leisure scholars have explored leisure as gendered, as a space for gender production, and have asserted that gender can be performed in unique ways in leisure settings (cf. Henderson, 1994; Henderson, & Bialeschki, 1999; Johnson, 2005; Jacobson & Samdahl, 1998; Samdahl, Jacobson, & Hutchinson, 2001; Shaw, 1994, 1999). Third wave feminism suggests participatory tactics may be best situated to study women's leisure. While certainly introducing new layers of vulnerability (cf. Johnson, 2009), we believe that duoethnographic methods, where we study ourselves, reduces the Othering and colonization present in varying degrees as a result of other methods. "Women studying women" (Henderson, 1994), for example, involves a degree of separation that requires translation:

> Indeed, an important question to ask is how we interpret and represent women's lives within the categories invented by anthropology and within the humanistic categories and narratives invented by the Enlightenment, modernity, and even postmodernity. It is at this nexus (of writing culture and being written by culture) that we must become vulnerable and, figuratively speaking, expose our breasts in contesting anthropology's perpetual project of inventing and redefining "culture" and "women" (Villenas, 2000, p. 75).

The idea of "baring one's breasts," draws upon Behar and Gordon's (1995) edited work, *Women Writing Culture*, in which the authors contend that women write culture just as much as culture writes women. This edited collection challenges women ethnographers to practice what Pillow (2003) calls "uncomfortable reflexivity:" "A reflexivity that pushes toward an unfamiliar, towards the uncomfortable, cannot be a simple

Duoethnographic Tenet Two

Ethical Stances: "First, by conducting research 'with' and not 'on' another, duoethnographers elude the research/researched dichotomy that situates the Other as a subject to be talked about. Duoethnographies are conversations that position the Other in dialogue, making the status one of equals....Second, duoethnographers take an ethnical pedagogical relationship with one another. ...They regard each other as both their teacher and student, assisting the Other in the making of meaning and receptive to the Other in reconceptualizing their own meanings " (Norris & Sawyer, 2012, pp. 20- 21).

story of subjects, subjectivity, and transcendence of self-indulgent telling" (p. 192). In recognizing that nothing is innocent, women as writers of culture are challenged to bare their own breasts, practicing reflexivity of their own power in what they are choosing to write and how they are choosing to represent. Most importantly, the baring breasts metaphor asks women writers to make their voice present in their writing:

> When a woman sits down to write, all eyes are on her. The woman who is turning others into the object of her gaze is herself already an object of the gaze. Woman, the original Other, is always being looked at and looked over. A woman sees herself being seen....The eyes on a woman's back are also her own eyes... Sitting down to write, a woman sheds the clothes of each of the different roles she has played and lets all the eyes of her experiences come forth as she contemplates her life and begins to put pencil to paper. (Behar, 1995, p. 2)

We respond to this challenge by baring our own breasts through our use of duoethnography as a way to interrogate and understand how we are written by and also write culture.

Now Back to Our Show

[We rejoin our program as the Host explains to the viewers how the journey will unfold.]

Host: *So thanks for joining us. Throughout our show this evening, we will take a journey through Callie and Karen's viewing experiences. For those of you who are new to watching* The Bachelor, *here's how it goes. The Bachelor is a 12-episode reality TV show in which 25 "eligible" women date one man—the bachelor—in this case, Ben. The goal is for Ben to find love and choose one woman to whom to propose in the dramatic season finale. Each two-hour episode consists of the bachelor going on extravagant dates to get to know the women better. There are a couple of "one-on-one" dates each week and one "group date" in which the bachelor takes several women out together. Each episode culminates with a formal cocktail party to give each woman one last chance to interact with the bachelor, followed by a "rose ceremony" during which Ben has fewer and fewer roses to give out. Any woman who does not receive a rose goes home. When there are four women left, Ben goes on a "hometown date" with each bachelorette to meet her family. When the competition is down to two, the bachelor takes each woman to meet his family. In the finale, Ben hopes to propose with a diamond ring.*

And now, join us for the one-on-one dates...

Duoethnographic Tenet Three

Currere: "Duoethnography views a person's life as a curriculum. One's present abilities, skills, knowledge, and beliefs were acquired/learned, and duoethnographers recall and reexamine that emergent, organic, and predominantly unplanned curriculum in conversation with one another" (Norris & Sawyer, 2012, p. 12).

Callie	Karen
I approached this experience with a plethora of questions all focused around "What is appropriate?" *Can I wear my sweatpants? What if I show up to her house with the "girls" free from the constriction of a bra? How much should I drink? Is one glass the limit? Two? At what point is the research hampered by my alcohol consumption? But then again, we are trying to stay true to how we would typically experience watching the show with a girlfriend, therefore, should I really limit myself, or just focus on enjoying myself? How do I talk about the women? What words do I use? Is it ok to curse? What if she asks me questions about my "boy situation?" Do I let her in, or do we keep this thing "professional?"*	So this project has made me realize some things about myself, as a woman, that I really don't like…that I find offensive, actually. First…*the "Southern Woman" in me reared her ugly head. Guess more of that expectation came from my first mother-in-law (who I could NEVER please or even live up to) than even from my mom, really… But was raised, in general, that your house should be clean, presentable at all times – and I SUCK at that. So vacuumed, dusted, put things away to have it look good, smell good. Which is SO not me. My housekeeping, since H [my daughter] was born, has just not been that much of a priority. Something had to go, and that was it (or one of the things…). Then I thought about what to wear tonight, what would be "appropriate" in hostess mode. It's* The Bachelor, *for fuck's sake… I should be braless and barefoot in sweats under my electric blankie… and instead I'm in my "good" jeans, flats, and a jacket. I even fixed my hair. SHOOT ME!*
In reflecting upon how I understood, constructed, and performed my own femininity during this experience, my ability to be the "Guru of Crazy" stands out. *Who says that? Who does that? Is she for serious right now? Really? She's nuts! Cookoo! Certifiably crazy! Literally, she's a true nutcase!* All of these phrases flew out of my mouth each show. If I was certain that I knew anything, it was that I could "call crazy" judge it and profess it to Karen when I saw it.	Then I find out I'm a catty bitch. And elitist. *Found myself judging the "VIP Cocktail Waitress." What is that?? Sounds like a lap-dancer to me… Can't count the number of times I heard myself saying something like, "Ohmygod! WHAT is she wearing?" The jumpsuit thing, the*
I demonstrated my knowledge of how I am supposed to act as a woman through defining how I am *not* supposed to act: crazy. Stand-up comedian, Jeff	

Foxworthy, does a bit called "You might be a redneck if…" in which he finishes that sentence prompt with a fill-in-the blank statement that describes endearing qualities of the stereotypical redneck.

According to me, the professor of all that is crazy, you might be crazy if…

- Your outfit is too revealing, looks like a doily, or too bright green (think Wizard of Oz).
- You cannot control your emotions.
- You seem desperate (especially if you talk about babies, marriage, or that you have quit your job in order to "find love" on the first date).
- You have orange skin from your fake tan.
- You use an excessive amount of foundation.
- You have no idea how to act sexually (particularly if you give instructions when you make-out with a boy).
- You are evil to the other girls.

My life is one huge contradiction. I am an intelligent woman, whose job it is to think critically. Why do I watch this shit? What is the draw? Why do I contradict myself? Why do I feel so guilty about it but also empowered by my guilty pleasure?

As I write this piece, and in my academic life, I claim to be a feminist writer, a feminist thinker. Yet, in this leisure space, I contradict everything I say I believe. Courtney is one of the girls on the show who did not act *one-sleeved dresses, the feather earrings, the raccoon eyeliner, the booty shorts, (and others) hurt my head. These are things I would never wear. :) Feels odd, tho, to be critical of folks who probably "get it" with respect to fashion... and have the bodies to pull off whatever they want. I can be a real snob sometimes... especially toward women (goes back to my "bow-head"* [pretty but vapid women] *aversion from time in the South). Seems more rooted in overt sexuality, tho, than in education... I've never been "sexy..." and maybe am jealous (?). I hope not... In general, tho, feel unattractive but smart... somehow that this position is made possible by "not being like them." Sounds so stuck up... like watching Jerry Springer for the sake of backhanded self-validation...*

And then, I talk out of both sides of my mouth. *Am just truly amazed and saddened by Jenna's manifestation of stereotypically, over-the-top chick emotions... I remember saying that "She's NUTS!" Just seemed so pathetic! Dunno if that makes me unsympathetic of my sex, or just realistic. I know it's staged, but seems to just try to highlight all of the "dark sides" of women. Should likely be more offended than I am.* And later, *seems, again, tho, that the real sport was the producers putting women in the position to become insane and then watch. I know, that's what the show is all about... but is more transparent sometimes than others (or I'm willing to admit it*

Duoethnographic Tenet Four

Trust: "Trust is a vital element in duoethnography. One does not want to reveal 'warts and all' to an unreceptive and uncaring person.... Without trust, disclosure is withheld, preventing a rich discussion of the phenomenon under investigation" (Norris & Sawyer, 2012, p. 23).

like the other girls. She acted out on her sexual desires by breaking rules and skinny dipping with Ben. She assertively staged a fake marriage ceremony. She was not sweet and kind to the other girls. For these things, I called her crazy, judging her for not fitting into the stereotypically passive mold that is instilled in my mind of how a good, Christian, southern woman should act (i.e., she should never pursue, but always be pursued by a man). What sort of feminist am I? What notion of "woman" am I ascribing to? How do I deal with the contradicting ways in which I am thinking and how I am acting? [...written after "Women Tell All"special episode]	*sometimes more than others). And then there's the ho... Courtney goes skinny-dipping with Ben. Who cares? But, again, I'm frustrated by the way women are portrayed. Women who are forward alienate other women, and men suck it up (yes, that's a generalization). And then I find myself hating Courtney for being so tacky... You'd think if I were really bothered by stereotypes, double standards, that I'd be psyched to see a woman acting in defiance of them...but, NO...I judge her as trashy. I know I sound contradictory, so bear with me. Think it goes to the idea that women aren't really even supposed to have sexual desires, even tho they're hyper-sexualized (in general if not personally) on a daily basis.*
Then Courtney was back and apologizing and weeping because her family has been really hurt by the tabloids, I realized that there was a really human piece to this that came out at that moment for me. For some reason, because these women are on TV, It is hard to remember that they are actually real people with real families, and I even felt a bit bad for perpetuating her demise by both buying and consuming the trashy magazines dishing juicy gossip on how nasty she is, as well as watching the "I'm winning" remix of her online. I am perpetuating her pain. Part of me almost maliciously thinks that she deserves it, that she really was a nasty person and did not portray herself well. But, then I think about all of the times I have acted badly or judged people wrongly, or said things that I wish I could take back...and how horrible it would	All told, being conscious of my thought processes during this experience made me intensely introspective. *I spend so much time juggling multiple roles...mom, wife, daughter, professor, administrator, sister, friend, sexual being...(in no particular order), and feel like I'm barely average at most of them. Go on "guilt trips" so easily...and spend so much time and emotional energy trying to pretend like I don't. Wish I had the guts to just be bold about it...but never have, doubt I ever will. Some feminist! Hah!* So here's my theory about watching this shit: *These folks get to do things in the name of Reality TV that most of us only dream about. It's like a James Bond movie. When was the last time you*

be if that stuff was recorded, replayed, and dished out to my family and friends. [...written after "Finale"]	*saw one of those set in, for example, Mobile, Alabama? We (OK, I...I'll own it) watch to escape...to go far away to beautiful places...with beautiful people (that we hypothesize we could look like with a little more effort...or that these beautiful people would really love if they got to know us)...to do beautiful things.* But, in reality (irony intended), *watching all these perfect, tiny women tap dances ALL OVER my body issues...*
I think, if anything, this experience is liberating. We are speaking badly about these women, sharing sometimes intimate tales of our lives, and being "real" or candid, and we don't give a damn...at least less of a damn as in other situations. It feels good to let loose. Although I think that getting there was a process, and that we are still holding up many filters, we are letting some of them down. We are taught at work to be mindful of "other" to not judge...to work towards making this world a more just place. However, we are othering the hell out of these women, not judging each other on it, and enjoying it. It is strange how something so "fake" or "staged" as reality TV can bring about a liberating experience for women in which we get to stop self-censoring for a moment and speak to each other impulsively in, perhaps, a more "real" way. Finally, I also realized that this show had a physical impact on me, on my female body and how I view it. *Whenever Karen leaves and goes upstairs, I always check myself out in the mirror. I am not really sure why I do this but it's always like, you know, "Am I looking alright?" There is definitely a bodily thing for me in watching these women. I'm like, you know, "These women are so skinny" and "I could never be on The Bachelor unless I'm skinny" and "Maybe I need to lose some*	*So what on Earth is there to say about skiing in bikinis?? In San Francisco?? Another body-image nightmare for me...What was funny (odd, not ha-ha) was listening to C crack on herself She's lovely, and yet has some distorted view of herself ..Makes no sense to me. I didn't look like that when I was her age (or ever). Makes me wonder why women are so hard on themselves...Is that a white thing? A hetero thing? Became aware of how much time I spend at physical and other types of self-loathing, criticism...Dunno that the evening's events reflected any real intellectual or other prowess...was all about physicality. Is that what dating's about?'Relationships? OK, yes, I know I'm hyper-critical of myself, so we've got to take that into account....But I know so many women who seem oblivious. Also, granted, it tends to be more physical than relational, but still. OK, too, so now I realize that this might make me sound like a prude (rooted in my own body-image issues), but I know, for example, a woman named W....she's*

Duoethnographic Tenet Five
Dialogic Change and Regenerative Transformation: Duoethnography recognizes the tyranny of reductionism... Duoethnography, therefore, makes one's current position problematic. One's beliefs can be enslaving, negating the self, but the act of reconceptualization can be regenerative and liberating. Duoethnography recognizes the need of the Other to liberate the self from the self" (Norris & Sawyer, 2012, p. 18).

weight" "There is no way in hell I would wear a bathing suit around these guys or on TV ever, for any reason ever." I feel like there is definitely a self-conscious piece to this that is probably unconscious in me that is kind of unhealthy. I definitely notice myself comparing myself to the women on there especially when Karen leaves. I won't do it while she is there, but when she leaves, there is a mirror that is on the closet to the left, and I look at myself and think, "How am I lookin?"	*a... big... girl. Really big. And yet she'll wear a bikini in front of folks at our house in the summer... Now is that healthy or not? I'm all about confidence and women being strong... but there seems to be a need for a reality check.* *... watching the sheer extravagance and excess of it all somehow makes my life (which I generally love) seem pale, lacking in comparison. Honestly, makes me kinda sad.* And yet I still watch... like gawking at a train wreck...

Commercial Break

Commercial One: Third Wave Feminism

We identify closely with the ideas of third wave feminism. Feminism cannot and should not prescribe a solution for any woman in respect to how she will navigate internal conflicts on how she will perform her gender or her sexuality. Third wave feminism presents what we call an "own it" philosophy. Can a stripper be a feminist? Sure, as long as she "owns it." Can a stay-at-home Southern Mama who supports her husband and raises her kids be a feminist? Sure, as long as she "owns it." Critical reflection upon the messages from society coupled with knowledge of the underlying power structures allow a woman to be knowledgeable about her choice on how to perform her gender identity and the implications her choice might have for calling into question (or not) the dominant structure. This process allows her to "own" her choice as she will know what she "owns" and how she is "owning it." "By occupying female subject positions in innovative or contradictory ways, third-wavers unsettle essentialist narratives about dominant men and passive women and shape new identities within the interstices of competing narratives. There is no one way to be a woman" (Snyder, 2008, p. 185). In describing this "own it" philosophy, we want to be clear by stating that we are not suggesting that oppressive structures such as patriarchy no longer exist or do not still have power to create unequal access for women. We are, instead, suggesting that there is not only more than one way to perform "woman," but also multiple ways of "resisting" (which may look more like reproduction) oppressive structures that are not traditionally thought of as counter-hegemonic performances.

Commercial Two: Creative Analytic Practice

We operate across several paradigms, as paradigm proliferation "is a good thing to think with" in research (Lather, 2006). As Lather argues, "Neither reconciliation nor paradigm war, this is about thinking difference differently, a reappropriation of contradictory available scripts to create alternative practices of research as a site of being and becoming" (p. 52). In this paper, we think through scripts present in feminist paradigms, in poststructural paradigms, and in third wave feminism.

Along with St. Pierre and Pillow (2000), "we prefer to think of the relationships we are working in and out of as feminist and poststructural, a relationship that gestures toward fluid and multiple dislocations and alliances" (p. 3). Aitchison (2000) has called for poststructural feminist analyses as "one means for enhancing the theoretical sophistication" of leisure studies (p. 127). As feminist poststructural researchers, we believe that knowledge is partial and constantly in flux. Our subjectivities are continuously shifting, and are constituted within gendered discourse. Richardson (1993, 2000) asserts that the relationships between subjectivity and objectivity, fact and fiction, the author and the subject, are not necessarily oppositional. Therefore, she pushes for new creative ways of understanding to be used in the social sciences, as there are many ways of knowing. She endorses Creative Analytic Practice (CAP) as a way to do reflexivity, challenge traditional paradigms, and to come to a new unique understanding of a phenomenon. For Richardson (1993, 2000), styles of writing such as poetry, or screenplay can evoke lived experiences, drawing the reader closer to the experience and encouraging complex understandings.

To engage in the complexity of lived leisure experiences, leisure scholars have recently supported CAP as a way to analyze such experiences richly (Berbary, 2008, 2011; Berbary & Johnson, 2012; Glover, 2007; Parry & Johnson, 2007). Aside from CAP being a creative way of representing data and inviting the reader into the experience, CAP is a mode of analysis in which the author gains an understanding of herself and the phenomenon through the writing process. Richardson and St. Pierre (2005) argue that the traditional research "model is itself a sociohistorical invention that reifies the static social world imagined by our nineteenth century foreparents" (p. 517). For them, the modern qualitative research experience is not consistent with the traditional structured form of writing. Not only does the traditional model make qualitative pieces uninteresting to read, it also "requires writers to silence their own voices and to view themselves as contaminants" (p. 517). As feminist researchers, our voices are necessarily present in every step of the research process.

Duoethnographic Tenet Six
Trustworthiness Found in Self-Reflexivity, Not Validity and Truth Claims:
"Duoethnographies portray knowledge in transition, and as such, knowing is not fixed but fluid. Truth and validity are irrelevant. What exists is the rigor of the collaborative inquiry that is made explicit in the duoethnography itself" (Norris & Sawyer, 2012, p. 20).

In writing research like a play, or in a multi-vocal multi-layered way (c.f. Lather and Smithies, 1997), the reader is invited to enter into the piece and make her or his own interpretations. Richardson (2000) provides us with five criteria for judging Creative Analytic Practice. We draw from those five below and invite you, as you read this article, to use these criteria to judge our piece.

1. Substantive contribution: Does this piece contribute to our understanding of social-life?
2. Aesthetic merit: Does this piece succeed aesthetically? Is the text artistically shaped, satisfying, complex, and not boring?
3. Reflexivity: How did the author come to write this text? How has the author's subjectivity been both a producer and a product of this text?
4. Impact: Does this affect me? emotionally? intellectually? generate new questions?
5. Expresses a reality: Does this text embody a fleshed out, embodied sense of lived-experience? (Richardson, 2000, p. 254)

Now Back to Our Show: Group Date

What do you get when you cross a gingerbread with a hooker? (Episode 2)

[The women are heading out on a group date in which they are to put on a play written and produced by a group of elementary school children. They show up to meet Ben in order to audition in front of the children for their roles. The camera pans all of the women. We immediately begin critiquing outfits. Blakely, the "VIP cocktail waitress," is wearing an outfit that catches our eyes. It is a blue and white pinstriped, one-piece, mini-shorts jumpsuit.]

Retrieved from: http://gaberobertsart.com/2012/01/the-bachelor-season-16-episode-2-apparently-bens-a-boob-guy/

Callie: What the fuck it that? Is that lingerie? Does her necklace say, "Fox?" Or "Jess?"
Karen: Her name's Blakely….[cracking up]

[The camera pans in on the faces of the elementary school children. They have blank stares and uncomfortable looks as Blakely steps on stage to audition. We are laughing hilariously as the kids did not know what to do with the "jumpsuit."]

Callie: Seriously…lapse of judgment [about the jumpsuit]. Makes her look insane.
Karen: [repeating comment made by a woman on the show when Blakely gets cast as the gingerbread girl in the play] What do you get when you cross a gingerbread with a hooker?
Both: [laughing hysterically]
[Camera cuts to the girls talking about Blakely]

Women on the show: "Everybody is about to punch this bitch in the face!" "She's a slut!" "She's toxic!" "Blakely is super fakely!"
Callie: I agree!!

Fruit cake. Insane. Certifiable. Nuts.: Hometown dates, Where Ben goes to meet Courtney's parents (Episode 10)

[Courtney and Ben have just left Courtney's parents' house. Courtney says she has one more surprise for him and takes him to a park where there are chairs and an altar area set up for a wedding ceremony. After the picnic, Courtney tells Ben that they will have a practice marriage ceremony. She whips a big bag out of nowhere and seems surprised with each item she pulls out: a bowtie, pens and paper to write vows, two rings (Note: She is wearing a white dress). We are mocking her every word.]

Karen: A picnic? A fucking picnic? What is it with the picnic?
Callie: They are writing vows? What the hell? That's it. She's going home. This is insane.
Ben (The Bachelor): She keeps me thinking.
Karen: Thinking you're nuts?
[A preacher appears. They recite their vows. Courtney tells him that she loves him and they put on rings made out of grass or twigs or something. They drive off in a car that says "almost married" and has tin cans behind it.]
Callie: That was absolutely, 100% crazy. Insane.
Karen: She is certifiable.
Callie: I would go running so fast if I was him. I mean I would high-tail it out of there.

Am I supposed to be wearing wrinkle cream?: During commercial for Avon (Episode 7)

Callie: Am I supposed to be using wrinkle cream?
Karen: I've never used any of it. Ever.
Callie: Teresa told me she does.
Callie: She started using wrinkle cream, and so did Haintsel….when she was 22, and she says, "Just you wait, call me when you are 45 and all wrinkly."
Karen: That's probably smart, and I spent too much time in the sun and have never used anything, and that is probably stupid, so there's probably something to it.
Callie: Like what do you do, put it on at night?
Karen: I dunno, you've got the wrong girl…I have no idea.
Callie: You'd think that as southern women we would know about wrinkle cream.
Karen: We should know about Ponds Cold Cream, I think that is a southern moment.
Callie: What's that do?
Karen: It's just like really heavy, like Crisco shit, 'cause its southern.
Callie: You put it on your face?
Karen: Honey, I've never done it. You're asking the wrong girl.
Callie: Is it for colds?
Karen: It's called cold cream. It is for your face. It feels cold when you put it on.
Karen: Some people use it to remove make-up… [stops mid-thought] I don't know! [sassy]
Callie: My friend who is 45, she looks great, she uses this 70 dollar wrinkle cream stuff.
Karen: I used Oil of Olay once. But I've got nothing for you. No, when you talk about a skin regime, I don't know what that means. REGIME? More than one thing at night? I don't know. I don't wash my face at night. I don't know.
Karen: I don't wear makeup, so I don't know. I haven't worn make-up since, like, third grade.
Callie: Not even, like, eye shadow?
Karen: Nope.

Duoethnographic Tenet Seven
Polyvocal and Dialogic: "Promoting heteroglossia—a multivoiced and critical tension (Bakhtin, 1981)—dialogues are not only between the researchers but also between researcher(s) and artifacts of cultural media (e.g., photographs, songs, the written study itself)" (Norris & Sawyer, 2012, p. 14).

Callie: Eye liner?
Karen: No.
Callie: Zit cover up?
Karen: Nope.

They aren't human-sized: During commercials for KY-jelly and Weight Watchers (Episode 1)

Karen: I think I'm gonna call Kacie B. as my horse [to win].
Callie: Hmmmm…he did say he liked brown-haired girls. The model is gonna make it far. I can tell you that for free. First of all, I look like a house compared to all those girls.
Karen: I mean they are not human-sized. What size are they?
Callie: I look like a hippo compared to them.
Callie: How do I look like that? Stop eating for a couple of months?
Karen: Seriously.
Karen: I wonder what it would be like if they actually had real women on here?

She makes me want to take my nose ring out: Blakely and Rachel have a two-on-one date with Ben. They go to a salsa class. (Episode 6)

Karen: [On Blakely's salsa dress] Wow, that's like a bad prom dress from the eighties.
Callie: [On salsa instructor] Look at her ass! Good gosh how do you get an ass like that?
Karen: Dance in heels.
Karen: [On Rachel] What she is doing is not sensual. Someone tell her. She needs a smaller nose ring too. It's making me crazy.
Callie: I agree. All of those piercings she has are just trashy. Too many piercings.
Karen: [When rewatching] She makes me want to take my nose ring out. Why is that? Except for that I don't want to be like her?

I don't own enough damn dresses. (Women Tell All Special Episode)

Karen: You should be on it [as a contestant]. Come on, be the PhD student. But, don't be crazy.
Karen: [To Emily] Stop being crazy. You are a PhD student.
Callie: If I was on *The Bachelor,* I would say, "Hold up, I've gotta call my professor to make sure what I did tonight is not crazy." [Pretending to make a phone call] "Karen, I've had 17 glasses of wine and I'm not sure if I should punch this girl in the face."
Karen: [Pretending to answer the phone call] "Don't be crazy."
Callie: What do you do all day on the show except for sit around the house and drink?
Karen: You get 20 minutes a day with him, then you drink.
Callie: I wonder if they make you sign something that you won't write about your experience once you leave?
Karen: No one ever has and that is weird. They keep 'em drunk all the time.
Callie: No one would let me on there, but I would love to go on there!
Callie: I am not skinny enough and I don't own enough damn dresses.
Callie: And they never wear the same dress twice, have you noticed that?
Karen: Nobody owns that many dresses! I'm not sure what you are supposed to do about that.

Karen: I was trying to think if I own one that would be appropriate.
Karen: [While re-watching] How do you even fit all that in a suitcase?
Callie: I don't know if I have a single dress I could wear.
Karen: I can't help ya. I've got nothing.

I'm embarrassing myself: Jamie and Ben before rose ceremony (Episode 6)

[Enter the most awkward part of the season. Jamie, the only one remaining who has not kissed Ben, plans her next meeting with Ben at the cocktail party right before the rose ceremony.]

Jamie: [Alone, during interview before she sees Ben] I want to turn Ben on. I want him to be attracted to me. He is looking for a sexy, fun girl and that's what I am going to give him. He's gonna be shocked.
Jamie: [to Ben] I have really big plans.
Ben: What are these really big plans?
Karen: Oh God, tell me she's drunk.
[Jamie hops on his lap, straddling him and ripping her dress.]
Karen: Oh my gosh, that is so not going well!
Jamie: I don't want to be that fancy with someone unless I really want to.
Callie: Fancy? Oh man you are getting fancy!
Jamie: I'm embarrassing myself.
Ben: No, you are not embarrassing yourself.
Callie: Oh, yes you are!
[They kiss. It looks horribly awkward.]
Jamie: I wanted to do something different.
Ben: I wasn't expecting you to go from zero to sixty in 3 seconds.
Jamie: I want to have a great kiss with you. First of all, when my mouth was open, your mouth was closed, So here is what we are going to do. We are gonna start with our mouths closed, and when we feel it out, we will open our mouths.
Callie: Is she drunk?
Karen: I hope so!
Ben: You are serious now? This is like an instruction guide. I can't handle this.
Jamie: [Alone, to camera after their kiss] I wanted to give myself to him and I don't think he thought I was cute.
Callie: I think if you have to give a guy an instruction manual on how to make out, it's not gonna go well. She's totally getting kicked off.
Karen: That hurt!

Women Tell All: Failure? Are We "Bad" Feminists?

Callie: What happens when "baring our breasts" is embarrassing?
Karen: I'm not sure. I can tell you that I'm not proud of some of the things I've said.

During the "Women Tell All" special episode, all of the women who have "failed" to receive roses are back and in front of a live studio audience. The Host replays some of the most embarrassing and heartbreaking moments of the show. We see our performances as third wave feminists (while we were watching the show) as "failing to receive a rose." Let us begin with a bit of a recap. First, take a moment to reread the very first conversation we had with one another (located at the very beginning of this paper). Next, consider a refresher on third-wave feminism:

> Third-wave feminism insists that each woman must decide for herself how to negotiate the often contradictory desires for both gender equality and sexual liberation… Despite media caricatures, however, the third-wave approach actually exhibits not a thoughtless endorsement of "choice," but rather a deep respect for pluralism and self-determination. (Snyder-Hall, 2010, p. 255)

Finally, remember what sort of a text is created through duoethnography: "Duoethnographies, then, are fluid texts where readers witness researchers in the act of narrative exposure and reconceptualization as they interrogate and reinscribe their previously held beliefs" (Norris & Sawyer, 2012, p. 9).

One commercial in this piece presents us as confident third-wave feminists, sure of our ability to "own it," ready to "bare our breasts," and strong in our stance as open-minded and nonjudgmental. Some feminists we are: We judge ourselves, judge our bodies, and judge other women who are potentially defining a version of feminism that is opposing the norm (think Blakely, the VIP cocktail waitress, and Courtney, the skinny-dipping model).

As we mentioned in the second commercial break, we are thinking across several paradigms. We find the contradictions in our lived experience very difficult to discuss from within just one paradigm. Therefore, it is useful to present a poststructural look at our experience by thinking through the way in which Butler (1997) presents language as a speech act. Language, for Butler, has the power to constitute a subject as well as to physically injure:

> The one who speaks the performative effectively is understood to operate according to uncontested power…. "It's a girl"….The power to "race" and, indeed, the power to gender, precedes the "one" who speaks such power, and yet the one who speaks nevertheless appears to have that power. If performativity requires a power to effect or enact what one names, then who will be the "one" who speaks with such a power, and how will such a power be thought? (p. 49)

As we "named" each of the women on the show "bunny boiler" or "slut" or "crazy," we performed injurious speech acts against them. Although they were not present to hear these acts, the physical ramifications were felt as we also performed a constitutive speech act. In marking the girls as "sluts" or "crazy," we were producing our own subjectivity (albeit in different ways). Our performances privileged certain versions of sexuality over others and, thus, we disciplined one another into performing a certain gendered subject position (perhaps as "sane," "normal," or "acceptable"). Further, our language around what a feminine body should look like again privileged a certain type of physicality, which, in this case, fit nicely with and reproduced the stereotypical woman as portrayed in magazine ads. We also injured ourselves.

Butler (1990) pushes for us to question any "successful" gender performance, asserting that one's gender is not some underlying construct that can successfully be reached; instead we should expose the failure to successfully perform. In examining failure, we can begin to understand the gendered power relations around such a constitution. Visweswaran (1994) attributes failure in feminist research to both epistemological and historical issues. She argues that part of the feminist fantasy is the idea that "we" as "women" can fully understand and relate to one another:

> I argue for a suspension of the feminist faith that we can ever wholly understand and identify with other women (displacing again the colonial model of "speaking for," and the dialogical hope of "speaking with"). This requires a trickster figure who "trips" on, but is not tripped up by, the seductions of a feminism that promises what it may never

> deliver: full representation on the one hand, and full comprehension on the other.... it is trickster agency that makes the distinction between success and failure indeterminate, alerting us to the "possibilities of failure." (p. 100)

We had hopes and full intentions of speaking with one another. However, speaking with someone else necessarily requires a grasp of your own subjectivities. Contradictions exist between how we were reflecting in our journals, how we were performing our femininity as we watched the show, and how we now are attempting to perform reflexivity through the writing process. With our understandings of ourselves and our femininity in constant flux, how can we speak in unison "with" one another?

If there is one thing upon which we both agree, it is that we cannot reach full comprehension of ourselves, much less of the "other." Each time I (Callie) reread our transcriptions, I read myself saying, "Who says that?" when referring to the other women. I then thought, "Who says what you just said?" back to myself. As I was criticizing the women for sounding, looking, and acting "crazy" (desperate, unstable, overly emotional), I was similarly performing the same "crazy" that I was critiquing in them.

With these examples, could it be that we really are more in alignment with McRobbie's (2007) ideas of postfeminism? She suggests that the current state of dissent and contradiction in feminist thought could be attributed to our current political state. She uses examples of the current political state of things (George Bush's conservative stance on marriage vs. gay couples now able to adopt) to describe what she calls a "double entanglement" (p. 28). "This comprises the coexistence of neoconservative values in relation to gender, sexuality, and family life with processes of liberalization in regard to choice and diversity in domestic, sexual, and kinship relations" (p. 28). Does my (Karen) traditional southern upbringing collide with my liberal life as a university professor in order to produce such a "double entanglement?" Is this why, as a third wave feminist I profess to reject being judgmental, or "othering," and then call women who dress provocatively "tarts?"

Duoethnographic Tenet Eight

Disrupts Metanarratives: "Duoethnography, by being polyvocal, challenges and potentially disrupts the metanarrative of self at the personal level by questioning held beliefs. By juxtaposing the solitary voice of an autoethnographer with the voice of an Other, neither person can claim dominance or universal truth" (Norris & Sawyer, 2012, p. 15).

If we are calling for a feminism in which we reflexively "own" our decisions, what does that look like? What does that look like in academic space? What does that look like in leisure space? One of the most prevalent outcomes of feminist leisure is empowerment through resistance (Henderson, 1996; Henderson & Gibson, 2013). Linking "empowerment" with "resistance" and opposed to "reproduction" of an oppressive status quo serves to create a narrow understanding of how a complex, "real-world" empowerment might manifest. Further, linking these concepts makes empowerment inextricably dependent upon the very hegemonic structures that created the need for it. This public performance demonstrates our experience of a more "messy" empowerment, one borne of reflexivity (positioning ourselves among and between resistance and reproduction). We ridiculed other women for engaging in stereotypical behaviors, thus making ourselves the catty bitches we mocked. For us, the empowering piece lies in the vulnerable, authentic, reflexive performances shared with you (the reader) in this document.

In reading this duoethnography, you have witnessed us in the "act of narrative exposure and reconceptualization" in which we have (uncomfortably at times) worked through how our leisure experiences of watching *The Bachelor* have both written us as we, in turn, write culture.

Duoethnographic Tenet Nine
Audience Accessibility: "Duoethnographies, then, are a form of praxis writing in which theory and practice converse.... Duoethnographies do not end with conclusions. Rather, they continue to be written by those who read them" (Norris & Sawyer, 2012, p. 21).

Through the writing process and performing the duoethnography, we have begun to realize our lived contradictions as third wave feminists. It is our hope that you (the reader) can enter into and continue the conversation by interrogating your own experiences of watching TV, reality or otherwise.

Callie: There's always that one person who has to slam everyone else...it's not attractive.
Karen: Check this out! Enter Oz [girl in green dress]! We're off to see the Wizard...
Both: [singing] ...the wonderful wizard of Oz!
[sound of laughing and glasses clinking]
Karen: So now he'll propose to the bitch, get dumped, and then end up on *Dancing with the Stars*.

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CHAPTER IV

ARTICLE II: RETHINKING "EMPOWERMENT" IN FEMINIST LEISURE RESEARCH

Abstract

While it often seems a "given," should the goal of feminist leisure research be empowerment? And what exactly do we mean by "empowerment?" Empowering for whom? For what purpose? Who gets to say? In this research reflection, we offer a critical (re)thinking of the notion of empowerment in feminist leisure research. In doing so, we aim to open a space for alternative understandings and experiences of empowerment in order to work toward a "more inclusive" (Henderson, 2011) leisure research.

(Re)Thinking "Empowerment" in Feminist Leisure Research

Karen and I (Callie) stood at a podium at the World Leisure Congress in Rimini, Italy, glasses of water in hand to mimic wine glasses, the screen behind us was playing a clip from an episode of the 16th season of ABC's *The Bachelor*. We invited the audience to join us in Karen's living room, then performed the first layer of our data by reenacting our own experiences of watching the show. As the bachelorette on the screen started sobbing, we responded:

Callie: *Are you serious right now? Tears? Really? On the first night?*
Karen: *She is nuts, certifiably crazy….cookooooo!*

Callie: *Get it together sister, you sound insane! Oh my, and what is that dress you're wearing?*

After the clip ended, we started another video in order to perform the second layer of data resulting from the reflexive methods in our study. This time the video starred the two of us watching the same clip from *The Bachelor* and commenting on it. As we watched ourselves watching the show, we concurrently read the following excerpts from our journals.

Karen: *Hard for me to see all these stick-skinny women in ridiculously expensive dresses. I've never owned anything like that! And where would I wear it?? Certainly plays on my body and self-image demons. Sadly, makes me question where my "life" went...My evenings are filled with checking on my should-be-sleeping kid...which is an odd contrast to the frivolity of the show. Dunno I ever lived like that, but dunno if anyone does, really... Cocktail parties? Dunno that I think Ben is particularly attractive, per se, but I never dated "the HOT guy."*

Callie: *I was thinking, "maybe I have the potential to look like Kacie B." HA! If I lose maybe ten or twelve, or fifteen pounds... She's got these gorgeous legs and these cool boots and she's southern so I definitely see myself in her a little bit...even just with the southern accent. There is this internal, "I need to look like that" that goes through my mind a few times during the show, but then again, half the time they look ridiculous in their dresses. I feel like I have an alright body image, but, when I see those girls, I am all of a sudden like, "Oh damn, I need to work on this."*

"Thank you ladies. Now, are there any questions?" asked the moderator of our session. An audience member raised her hand and asked, "How is what you are doing empowering?"

At the time, we unsatisfactorily stumbled over an answer; however, we have continued to ponder her question. While we could state why we thought what we were doing was "empowering," our understanding and experience of what it meant to be empowered did not fit within the "resistance leads to empowerment" (Henderson & Gibson, 2013) framework commonly used within feminist leisure scholarship. At times, we were very much reproducing rather than resisting stereotypical gender norms. We

criticized the women on the show and, at the same time, put ourselves down by critiquing our own bodies as "not (thin, tan, young) enough." However, in our open and vulnerable dialogue, facilitated by a duoethonographic (Norris, Sawyer, & Lund, 2012; Sawyer & Norris, 2013; Spencer & Paisley, 2013) methodology, we felt empowered. As we publically wrestled between being "good feminists" by resisting the patriarchal discourses of *The Bachelor,* and loving the cattiness of the lack of self-censorship as we critiqued skirt length (therefore reinforcing oppressive patriarchal discourse), we actively *positioned* ourselves *within* an oppressive dialogue.

Since then, we recognized that rather than focusing on the answer to the audience member's question, a more important exercise was to critically rethink the question itself: Should the goal of feminist leisure research be empowerment? And what exactly do we mean by "empowerment?" In offering a critical (re)thinking of the notion of empowerment in feminist leisure research, we aim to open a space for alternative understandings and experiences of empowerment so as to work toward a "more inclusive" (Henderson, 2011) leisure research.

Why Critique Empowerment?

Feminist scholars of the 1980s-1990s (often referred to as second-wave feminists), introduced an emancipation-focused epistemology and methodology to feminist research. They used terms such as empowerment, reflexivity, praxis, positionality, consciousness raising, and intersectionality (Fonow & Cook, 1991). However, the meanings of these terms have been critiqued by critical and poststructural feminist scholars in an attempt to make sense of the terms within an increasingly complex understanding of lived experiences in the current political socio-economic state (see

Pillow, 2003 for reflexivity and McCall, 2005 for intersectionality). As Lather (2007) highlights, "More recent articulations raise troubling questions about how we think about how we think and learning to learn differently where 'giving voice,' 'dialogue,' 'telling and testifying,' and 'empowerment' have lost their innocence" (p. 75). The idea of terms "losing their innocence" echoes Foucault's (1984/1983) oft-cited sentiments, "My point is not that everything is bad, but that everything is dangerous, which is not exactly the same as bad" (p. 343). For Foucault, the more hope a term has attached to it, the more "good" or innocent it seems, and the more widely accepted the term is, the more dangerous it becomes, warranting critique. As Spivak (1988) reminds us, ideas that should be critiqued (deconstructed) are those which one "cannot not want" (p. 278). In feminist leisure scholarship, "empowerment" is a common goal or outcome that is often accepted as unquestionably good (read: innocent or dangerous), it is something that feminists cannot *not want* as part of a feminist project. It is a taken-for-granted term, however, it is rarely defined.

What Is "Empowerment?"

According to the Collins English Dictionary, empowerment is a noun and is defined as:

1. the giving or delegation of power or authority; authorization
2. the giving of an ability; enablement or permission
   (Retrieved from:
   http://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/empowerment)

This definition of empowerment requires two actors. One actor (the subject) holds the power and gives that power over to another actor (the object). This definition comes with at least two assumptions. First, power is something that one can own and, therefore, choose to give to another (or not). Second, the subject is already empowered and the

object is not. In other words, when we make the statement that the goal of our research is "to empower women to_____," we are making the assumption that we are already empowered (which may or may not be true or even possible) and that we have the ability to empower others, who, we assume, need to be empowered.

We (now Callie and Karen, specifically) take a Foucauldian view of power that refutes the first assumption. For Foucault (1994/1979), power is not something that one owns: "power is not a substance" (p. 324). It is, instead, a relationship. Therefore, power cannot be exchanged in such a straightforward manner because it does not exist as a commodity. Power, instead, operates in multiple, fluid, shifting networks of relationships. It is disciplined into individuals by institutions, by other individuals, and by oneself as one forms oneself as a subject (necessarily *subject to* a power relationship).

The second assumption can be challenged by Ellsworth's (1989) work on dispelling the myths of empowerment in education. She highlights pedagogy as a space in which the ideas of empowerment are often uncritically applied: Teachers are expected to empower students to_____. However, Ellsworth found the normative use of the ideas of empowerment in the classroom to produce "results that were not only unhelpful, but actually exacerbated the very conditions we were trying to work against, including Eurocentrism, racism, sexism, classism" (p. 298). Specifically, one problem with traditional empowerment was the way it created an "illusion of equality while in fact leaving the authoritarian nature of the teacher/student [subject/object or empowered/to be empowered] relationship in tact" (p. 306). Empowerment, then, "treats the symptoms but leaves the disease unnamed and untouched" (p. 306). A second issue surrounding common understandings of empowerment comes with what Ellsworth calls,

"emancipatory authority."[1] The teacher, or the person empowering the "Other," holds the power to answer the question: Empowerment for what? For the "betterment of human kind?" For "more opportunities for women?" These are broad, ahistorical, and depoliticized goals. Parpart, Rai, and Staudt (2002) and Staudt, Papart, and Rai (2002) also rail against this de-politicized and de-contextualized conceptualization of empowerment. They assert that without a more contextually and politically specific answer to this question, empowerment becomes a broad humanist project that cannot effectively make any sort of change, whether to an individual, social position, institution, or policy.

Empowerment in Feminist Leisure Research

While issues surrounding the definition of empowerment have not been specifically addressed in feminist leisure literature, empowerment has remained a prominent project with a growing history in the field (Henderson, 1996). Feminist leisure scholars have actively debated the processes through which empowerment occurs in leisure spaces, specifically focusing on the link between resistance and empowerment (c.f. Green, 1998).

Henderson and Gibson (2013), in their review of feminist leisure literature from 2006-2010, named "*resistance and empowerment through leisure*" (p. 121, emphasis in original) as a popular theme. Their review revealed that leisure was "a means for resistance leading to empowerment" (p. 121). In particular, they highlighted studies in

[1] Ellsworth asserts that the idea of emancipatory authority is flawed from the beginning, aligning it with a "paternalistic project of traditional education." "It implies the presence of or potential for an emancipated teacher" (p. 307). Ellsworth makes a strong case that no such thing is possible as one can never unproblematically be free of one's own "learned and internalized oppressions. Nor are accounts of one group's suffering and struggle immune from reproducing narratives oppressive to another's---the racism of the Women's Movement in the United States is one example" (p. 307).

which women were empowered through their participation in leisure time activities not generally pursued by females, such as bodybuilding (Probert, Palmer, & Leberman, 2007) and boxing (Cove & Young, 2007). Shaw (2001) explains that resistance can be a positive repercussion of leisure as a political practice at both an individual and a societal level: Women can use their leisure to resist normative expectations of gender performance, leading to individual empowerment as well as social change.

The notion of empowerment as linked to resistance has also been troubled by leisure researchers who challenge the resistance=empowering, reproduction=disempowering binary. Parry, Glover, and Shinew (2005), in their study of gender roles in a community garden, found that reproduction and resistance, at times, occurred simultaneously. Raisborough and Bhatti (2007) similarly question what they call the "conceptual couplet" of resistance and empowerment in feminist leisure research. They argue that the concept of empowerment is generally understood through a Western, neoliberal lens of "autonomy, liberation and independence," which "masks the lived experiences of women's everyday realities" (p. 474). They discuss a woman's gardening experiences in three ways: as a story of resistance, as a story of reproduction, and as a story of creative positioning. "Positioning" refers to the intentional location of oneself and one's complex and shifting identities within competing discourses. While positioning does not deny the hegemonic structures limiting possibility of choice, it allows for some maneuverability regarding *which* ideal to align oneself and *where* on a possible spectrum of possibilities to do so. Raisborough and Bhatti (2007) conclude that when we tease out the notion of empowerment from a resistance/reproduction dichotomy and escape the all-too-clear-cut framework, we can find more complex reads such as *positioning* in which a

multitude of political performances are possible and *empowerment* is not so narrow an ideal.

(Re)Defining ~~Empowerment~~

Our experiences of empowerment while watching *The Bachelor* (and in subsequent performances of our research) align more clearly with Raisborough and Bhatti's (2007) conceptualization of empowerment through positioning rather than the "empowerment through resistance" binary. In our conscious positioning through open and vulnerable dialogue, we expressed dichotomous feelings (resistance and reproduction) to one another (and publically), and felt empowered through recognition of our own disempowerment.

Our experiences led us to create a working "definition" of empowerment through which to think about our own work. Drawing on Derridian (1976, 1982) ideas of putting a concept "under erasure," rather than empowerment, we suggest ~~empowerment~~. The strikethrough indicates not that the term should be discarded, but that its meanings, the structures that create those meanings, and the term's innocence are all up for questioning. Putting a term under erasure decenters any one, singular, sweeping meaning, highlighting the role of power and context in the ways we understand the concept. ~~Empowerment~~ foregoes binaries. ~~Empowerment~~ is not *either* associated with resistance *or* reproduction of oppressive systems; instead, the relationship is *both/and/between*. Therefore, experiences of ~~empowerment~~ are often interlaced with experiences of its corollary, ~~disempowerment~~. While it is rather paradoxical to attempt to define a term that one puts under erasure, we want to suggest one (of many) possible starting points. Our definition borrows from Lather's (1991) understanding of empowerment as a "*process* one

undertakes *for oneself*; it is not something done 'to' or 'for' someone" (emphasis added, p. 4). Lather (1991) acknowledges a Foucauldian relationship between power and knowledge by explaining that the continuing process of empowerment begins with "analyzing ideas about the causes of powerlessness…and acting both individually and collectively to change the conditions of our lives" (p. 4). We pull from Lather's words to create the following conceptualization of ~~empowerment~~ as a process that necessitates action in the form of both analysis and positioning (taken from Raisborough and Batti). The strikethrough indicates that this meaning, even though nailed down in writing for the purpose of this discussion, is not fixed. It is constantly in flux, perpetually in a state of (re)negotiation.

> ~~Empowerment~~ : noun
> A continual process of 1) "analyzing ideas about the causes of powerlessness" (Lather, 1991, p. 4) and 2) (re)positioning oneself within that discourse.

With this in mind, we will demonstrate our experiences of the continual process of ~~empowerment~~ by sharing excerpts from our journals (~~empowerment~~ through lack of self-censorship) and by presenting a conversation between Karen and myself following the audience member's question (~~empowerment~~ through public performance).

~~Empowerment~~ through Lack of Self-Censorship

Callie:
I cherished the candidness that the show brought out in me. In some ways, it felt like *The Bachelor* acted as a social-leveler by allowing Karen and I to speak openly to one another about the women on the show, about our own lives, and sometimes about work. There was something uncannily freeing in the way in which I was able to stop self-censoring while watching the show with Karen. With all of the "hats" I wear on a daily basis: Ph.D. student, feminist, teacher, partner, daughter, southern woman, social justice activist, friend, I find that I am often censoring my body, disciplining myself, consciously holding my tongue. In this space, however, I could "behave badly" and not be judged. In a way, it felt good to hyper-perform my own femininity by buying into the "fairy tale" (something

the feminist Ph.D. student in me would be highly critical of) and dreaming of traveling, sexy dresses, and lavish parties (playing make-believe?). It also felt good to embrace cattiness, to critique hair, make-up, and emotional display like I was some sort of *What Not to Wear* expert. Yet, on the other hand, I wondered why it felt good to poke at the women on the show, to make Karen laugh at their expense,[2] to be so judgmental? Was this catty bitch a more "real" representation of the uncensored version of Callie than the ways in which I performed as feminist, Ph.D. student, daughter, teacher? If so, I didn't like that idea. It seemed like I defaulted to the influences of consumer capitalism, happily reproducing patriarchal ideals, disciplining myself and other women into a version of woman that lives in the imagination of a White, middle class, and probably shallow male. But, I cannot deny how much I felt empowered by "taking off the filter" and allowing myself a space to act outside of the social norms that guide my daily performances.

Karen:
Doing this study with Callie gave me some much needed "chick time" that I've been missing… I spend so much time and energy every day performing different roles…mom, wife, daughter, professor, administrator. There are different rules for each role, and sometimes it's hard to keep up. Not sure, frankly, that I do any of them well (or which is "me") – but I do approach each of them with conscious thought and intention. Then for one evening a week, I could just relax and be…and laugh. And I mean belly laugh, to the point of tears. Until I really thought about *why* I was laughing. I claim to be a feminist (though I'm relatively new to the literature)…and yet I hear myself shredding the women on the show. I'm a catty, elitist bitch. I'm mocking these women who are ten times better looking than me…poking at their jobs, their hair and clothes. I'm making fun of women I don't even know – not sure if that makes it better or worse. And I enjoy it! I have a few drinks. I munch on processed snacks. I wear sweats and take off my bra. I can be funny and crass and basic (for want of the right word). I feel less claustrophobic, like I can breathe…more like myself. But is it a "me" I like? Sometimes I think I question myself simply because someone else says I should. Confession? I love Disneyland, James Bond movies, and Skittles…and hate to exercise. I love fantasy escapism…despite its commercial, consumptive orientation and even the misogyny. And, yes, I work in a College of Health (NOT Skittles friendly). I guess I don't fit in "boxes." So why force it? Plumb evades me…

~~Empowerment~~ through Public Performance

Callie: *If we were to answer the question, "~~empowerment~~ for what?" What would be our answer?*

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[2] According to Green (1991), "Women-only company affords women the chance to 'let their hair down' and 'behave badly', i.e. outside the limits of 'normal, acceptable, womanly behaviour'….Humour can pinpoint incongruities in the way 'things are supposed to be and the way things are'; it can also be used to enforce the rules of the culturally dominant group, or to subvert them" (p. 181).

Karen: *Well, I would personally say ~~empowerment~~ for the purpose of authenticity, the ability to be* real. *Even if that "real" ain't pretty.*

Callie: *Yep, and I would add, making it OK for me to wear contradictory "hats," to perform multiple subjectivities. I guess it's ~~empowerment~~ for self-permission (in a very censored world), expanding the possibilities for my own subjectivity.*

Karen: *Our performance at the World Leisure Congress was a big part of the process of ~~empowerment~~ for me. We were* publically *vulnerable and, honestly, that felt icky and bold at the same time. We "let our hair down" and "behaved badly" in front of an audience and it was, quite frankly, embarrassing. But, owning and expressing our conflicting experiences that way felt real…honest…freeing.*

Callie: *I was nearly shaking when we were performing our data. I felt naked, but, then again, I didn't feel alone. I guess I felt like I was speaking a "truth" that's often silenced in that arena…and the reaffirming nods from some audience members made me feel like my experience was a shared one.*

Karen: *I hear ya.*

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CHAPTER V

ARTICLE III: *THE BACHELOR* AND THE CULTIVATION OF GIRL CODE

Abstract

The bachelorettes on ABC's hit reality TV series, The Bachelor, perform a certain "girl code" to viewers. Specifically, in order to be fit for love, girls should "play nice" with other girls and should be in control of their emotions (rather than be a "crazy" sobbing mess). But what do viewers do with these messages? This paper dialogically presents the ways in which we (three female researchers and Bachelor fans) confronted discourses of girl code during a season-long duoethnographic study of viewer experiences. Specifically, we aimed to explore how female viewers resist, repurpose, (re)produce, and otherwise negotiate messages to construct gendered subjectivities both for themselves and for other women through their performances within leisure spaces surrounding The Bachelor. In alignment with our feminist poststructural duoethnographic methodology, and our three-tiered data generative surveillance methods (watching, blogging, and watching ourselves watch), we relay our experiences through three dialogic performances. These layered performances are presented alongside theory to create multivalent ways of "reading" our interactions with The Bachelor girl code and cultivation of our own girl code in the space of the research.

The Bachelor and the Cultivation of "Girl Code"

After checking to make sure the screen would capture all three of our reactions to the show, I (Callie) pushed [RECORD] on the video camera, which was set up on a stand behind the oversized couch located in front of the TV. Bobbie and Rose had already made themselves comfortable with their feet kicked up on the coffee table and glasses of wine in hand. After sinking in-between the two, I followed suit by propping my feet up and snuggling beneath the pile of blankets. I took a slow sip (or maybe it was more like a gulp) of red wine, and let out an "ahhhh" referring simultaneously to the taste of the wine and the moment. It was finally "girl time," time to relax and enjoy the cattiness of the reality TV show, The Bachelor, *with my new-found girlfriends.*

With an average of 8.5 million viewers per episode and a ranking in the top ten[1] "most-watched shows" every week during the 12 weeks it aired, the 17th season of ABC's reality TV show, *The Bachelor,* was an undeniable hit among the 18-49 year-old demographic. Since the advent of the reality TV genre in the mid-1990s (with MTV's *The Real World*), *The Bachelor* is the "most successful and the longest running" series (Dubrofsky, 2009, p. 353) and shows no sign of decline. With its overwhelming popularity and longevity, the reality TV genre has drawn increasing attention from critical and cultural scholars[2], the majority of whom have focused on the content of the shows and the messages being sent to viewers. Critiques have centered on "the real,"

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[1] These numbers are taken from the 2013 Neilson ratings during the 17th season of *The Bachelor* and can be found at www.nielson.com.

[2] For work on reality TV, see Brown, 2005; Cato & Carpentier, 2010; Fairclough, 2004; Graham-Bertolini, 2004; Mendible, 2004; Oulette & Murray, 2009; Van Bauwel & Carpentier, 2010. For work specifically on *The Bachelor,* see Bonsu, Darmody, & Parmentier, 2010; Brophy-Baermann, 2005; Dubrofsky, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2009, 2011; Dubrofsky, & Hardy, 2008; Yep & Camacho, 2004.

authenticity, surveillance, and mediated constructions of gender and race. However, what has not been thoroughly explored is what audiences are doing with the messages sent by reality TV. Although some scholars have indeed performed empirical work on reality TV audiences (c.f., Cloud, 2010; Hill, 2005), they have used techniques such as mass surveys and discourse analysis of fan discussion boards. In contrast, this study offers a "hands-on" duoethnographic approach that provides an in-depth understanding of viewer experiences. Specifically, we wanted to ethnographically explore how viewers are actively resisting, repurposing, (re)producing, and otherwise negotiating messages sent by The Bachelor.

This question is important because gendered subjectivity production is at stake. As leisure scholars Johnson, Richmond, and Kivel (2008) have noted, it is through interactions with artifacts of popular culture, such as reality television, that viewers are sent messages on how to perform as gendered subjects. In leisure spaces (such as when watching television with girlfriends), audiences actively resist, repurpose, (re)produce, and otherwise negotiate such messages, effectively disciplining themselves and one another into performing certain gendered subjectivities. Rose, Bobbie, and I (Callie) sought to explore audience responses by conducting a duoethnography of our experiences watching the 17th season of The Bachelor. Our focus was not on the "work of being watched" (Andrejevic, 2004) but, instead, on the self-producing "work of watching others being watched" (Dubrofsky, 2011, p. 127). Specifically, the purpose of our study was to explore how women challenge, (re)produce, assign, and construct gendered subjectivities both for themselves and for other women through their performances within leisure spaces surrounding The Bachelor.

This paper dialogically presents our performances as we confront, experience, and negotiate one particular discourse that we frequently encountered during our study, that of "girl code." We begin with an introduction of girl code. Then, we present a discussion of theoretical influences on our thinking about girl code followed by a study overview. In line with our poststructural feminist duoethnographic methodology, the second half of the paper will be dedicated to an open-ended and, at times, contradictory dialogic performance of our data. By juxtaposing our vulnerable, sometimes conflicting narratives, we strive to resist foreclosure that comes with writing a metanarrative of experience. Our aim is to leave an opening for the story to continue to be written, which requires something more from readers: an active role (Britzman, 2000). We encourage readers to insert their own stories and critically reflect upon personal experiences of girl code. We also encourage critical questioning of the representation style of the text itself and the ways in which the (broken, partial, multiple) discourse presented below constructs and privileges certain "reads" over others, with no "innocent" read (Lather, 2007).

What Is Girl Code?

Girl Code is a set of "rules" or normative expectations surrounding how one should perform one's gender as "woman[3]." These rules are guided by gender stereotypes and work to keep those same stereotypes in place. While there has been little work specifically on girl code, (c.f., Pipher, 2005) scholars have critically approached "boy code" (c.f., Kindlon & Thompson, 2000; Pollack, 1998, 2006) by tracing the role of hegemonic patriarchal power in creating and sustaining the "myths"

[3] We see gender as performative (Butler, 1990). Gender is not something one *is*; rather, it is something one *does*. In other words, gender is not biologically determined, it is continually socially constructed through performances during which a person is (re)creating herself/himself as a gendered subject.

of the code. For these scholars, boy code includes "acting tough," by never showing "sissy" (feminine) emotions and always "being cool," in control of the situation as the "sturdy oak" (Pollack, 1998, p. 24). Boy code has been critiqued as stunting boys' emotional development and creating a narrow view on "acceptable" performances of masculinity (leading to shame and depression in boys who do not perform within the acceptable range). In better understanding and critiquing girl code, our goal, in alignment with the aforementioned scholars, is to expand possibilities for gendered performances. To begin this project, it is important to first explore the ways in which females learn the code.

Girls, "pinked" out of the womb, learn girl code by being slowly initiated/disciplined into it (often unconsciously) and by practicing it. Practice frequently takes place during leisure time activities such as playing on playgrounds, playing soccer, dancing, attending church, shopping, dating, playing make-believe, or watching television with girlfriends. Females are taught the code by girlfriends, mothers, fathers, boyfriends, teachers, priests, coaches, interactions with various media artifacts, etc. In this paper, we use "girl" code rather than "woman" code because we view gender as always "under construction" or consistently being (re)performed and negotiated among shifting contexts and power relations. Rather than something a young female must master, learn, or break (decode) on her path to achieving (finite) "woman," girl code is something that females of all ages must continually navigate and (re)write in the continual process of performing as a gendered subject.

There is no *one universal* girl code, nor is there *one universal* experience of girl code. Instead, girl code is contextual, influenced by social structures and norms surrounding race, class, age, sexuality, ethnicity, and religious background

(paradoxically, girl code works simultaneously to write those norms into being). The Bachelor conveys a certain girl code, that of White, middle to upper class, single, heterosexual, 20-40 year-old American women who are in a particular dating situation (akin to a harem, perhaps). In addition, the ways in which we interacted with the girl code relayed by the show and established our own girl code were influenced by our respective backgrounds as White, middle-class, educated (graduate-degree holding), 20-40 year-old, heterosexual, American women (akin to the show's target viewer demographic).

Girl Code and *The Bachelor*

At first glance, The Bachelor is all about love and romance. A "fairy-tale love story" geared toward an adult female audience, the plot revolves around one man courting (or sifting through) 25 eligible bachelorettes to find his true love. Paralleling fairy tale tropes, the bachelor (prince charming) takes each bachelorette on extravagant dates (rags to riches) until he finds his princess (one true love) and asks her to marry him (happily ever after). Sound a bit like Cinderella? However, there is another not-so-subtle storyline that runs alongside the love story and, arguably, dominates the show: The establishment and navigation of "girl code," or, what happens when you put 25 women in one house in a competitive scenario where they all date the same man? The majority of the airtime focuses not on the bachelor's quest to "find true love," but on the "sandbox" where the bachelorettes explore what it means to "play nice" with one another. Rose, Bobbie, and I learned comparatively little about what it means to find true love or be in a relationship with a man. Instead, our discussions centered on what it meant to have a relationship with other women. These lessons are grounded in discourse surrounding what it means to be a woman or, more specifically, how one should

properly perform as a gendered subject. Our conceptualization and use of girl code in this study is guided by the theoretical lens of Pierre Bourdieu's (1984, 1990, 2001) habitus. Habitus offers a lens through which we can trace the way girl code is established and fleshed out through physical performances. In tracing power through performance, we can see that physical performances of girl code ensure repetition and keep a certain hegemonic system in place.

Habitus and Girl Code

> Femininity is imposed for the most part through an unremitting discipline that concerns every part of the body and is continuously recalled through the constraints of clothing or hairstyle. The antagonistic principles of male and female identity are thus laid down in the form of stances, gaits, and postures which are the realization, or rather, the naturalization of an ethic. (Bourdieu, 2001, p. 27)

"Because that's how girls naturally sit" is the response that I (Callie) received from a female student when I asked students to observe their postures and tell me why they chose to sit in these positions. Most females either had their legs tightly crossed or close together, knees touching, while the majority of males sat with legs open or loosely crossed, foot-to-knee. While constraints of clothing (short skirts vs. pants) and discourses of modesty can be cited for such postures, there is nothing inherently or biologically "natural" about a female crossing her legs. For Bourdieu (2001), bodies naturalize a dominant (male)/submissive (female) ethic contained in an aesthetic shaped by "cardinal adjectives, high/low, straight/twisted, rigid/supple, open/closed" (p. 28).

*Habitu*s is a theoretical concept describing the way in which behaviors are normalized. Habitus has a rich history in Sociology (Nash, 1999), with early conceptualizations traced to Aristotle and more contemporary understandings presented by Durkheim (1964), Mauss (1979), and Bourdieu (1984, 1990, 1993, 2001). Bourdieu

has the most extensive theoretical work and is often credited with popularizing the concept. Feminist scholars have "appropriated" (Moi, 1990) Bourdieu's conceptualization of habitus by pairing the concept with feminist theory in order to explore gendered subject production within societal and historical power structures (c.f. McCall, 1992; McLeod, 2005; McNay, 2000; Moi, 1990; Reay, 1995, 2004; Skeggs, 1997, 2004; Thorpe, 2009). Therefore, in this paper, we will utilize Bourdieu's (1990) theoretical perspective on habitus. For Bourdieu, one's habitus is born out of social and historical power structures that work to keep certain behaviors unquestionably "natural." Habitus is something that one is either born into or initiated into slowly over a period of time. It works unconsciously in an individual to shape aspects of practice, thought, and perception, thereby reproducing the social conditions of power constituting its existence.

> The *habitus*, a product of history, produces individual and collective practices—more history—in accordance with the schemes generated by history. It ensures the active presence of past experiences, which, deposited in each organism in the form of schemes of perception, thought and action, tend to guarantee the 'correctness' of practices and their constancy over time, more reliably than all formal rules and explicit norms. (Bourdieu, 1990, pp. 53- 54)

Girl code can be thought of as a habitus. Girl code operates subliminally without the formality of a rulebook. It is not specifically articulated. Rather, it is something females "just know" how to perform without consciously thinking about it. It comes "naturally." As poststructural feminist scholars (Lather, 2001, 2007; St. Pierre & Pillow, 2000) remind us, nothing is innocent, or, in reverse, "everything is dangerous" (Foucault, 1984/1983, p. 343). It is precisely such natural, seemingly innocent performances of girl code which warrant "persistent critique" (Spivak, 1988, p. 28) in order to unmask the power structures behind their existence.

For habitus to be critiqued, one must be able to consciously confront it. Girl code is unmasked, or comes into the forefront of reflective consciousness, when it is broken, when one performs outside of what is considered normal and within the code. Performers who violate the code are often immediately disciplined by others (parents, teachers, peers, lovers, society) into performing the "correct" version of the code. This happens through a variety of ways including, but not limited to, verbal reprimand, teasing, bullying, physical punishment, body and facial expressions of displeasure, or ostracism. For Bourdieu, the process by which habitus can move into consciousness is through encounter with a new *field*. A field is specific social setting structured by hierarchical power relationships (e.g., a sorority house, a workplace, a drug dealer's corner, a collaborative research setting, or a competition for a man against 24 other women) (Bourdieu, 1993). When a person enters an unfamiliar field, she or he must consciously think about performing correctly in that social setting. The result can be a shift in one's habitus. As Reay, David, and Ball (2005) explain:

> When habitus encounters a field with which it is not familiar…the resulting disjunctures can generate change and transformation but also disquiet, ambivalence, insecurity and uncertainty. Implicit in the concept is that habitus operates at an unconscious level unless individuals confront events which cause self-questioning, whereupon habitus begins to operate at the level of consciousness and the person develops new facets of the self. (p. 28)

As collaborative feminist duoethnographers, Bobbie, Rose, and I each brought our own understanding of girl code, but found ourselves in a new field. In this hyper-surveilled research "field," we were able to consciously interact with our experiences of girl code as we got to know the bachelorettes, ourselves, and one another. In submitting ourselves to surveillance leading to reflexive self-questioning, we found that alternative possibilities

for gendered subjectivity performance existed. In such scenarios (ones in which one's habitus moves to consciousness), girl code can be resisted, repurposed, or (re)produced, and one's habitus can shift.

Duoethnography

In order to explore our gendered performances as we watched and interacted with messages sent by The Bachelor, we chose a duoethnographic methodology. As feminist researchers, duoethnography was especially appealing as its tenets align well with feminist research praxis (Spencer & Paisley, 2013). Duoethnography (Norris, 2008; Norris, Sawyer, & Lund, 2012; Sawyer, & Norris, 2013) is a methodology in which researchers investigate a phenomenon by studying themselves (in an autoethnographic sense) in conjunction with an "Other" researcher(s) (in an ethnographic sense) in order to create a multivocal and critical understanding of that phenomenon. Duoethnography recognizes the importance of dialogue and the role of "the Other" (person and/or media object) in understanding a phenomenon as knowledge is not created in a vacuum. The researcher/researched dichotomy is blurred as all participants are, at the same time, researchers and researched. Duoethnographies are written in a polyvocal, conversational fashion presenting different and often contradictory views of multiple researchers. The idea is to disrupt metanarratives of experience and invite readers to interject their own voices. Therefore, unlike many qualitative research reports, a duoethnographic report should not "tie a bow" around "findings" with a neat discussion and conclusion section in which collective themes of experience are presented and analyzed in a closed package for the reader to consume. Rather than the "telling" that occurs in such data presentation, "dialogic" data presentation can allow readers to imagine themselves in similar

conversations with friends and insert their own voices, as there is no one correct interpretation. Our goal is for the open-ended dialogue presented below to leave room for multivalent understandings of the phenomenon of girl code.

Within our duoethnographic methodology, we employed the following methods in three layers of data-generative surveillance:

1. In order to capture our live performances as viewers, we video-recorded ourselves watching the show each night.
2. We wrote weekly reflections on our experiences of watching on a public blog (blogaboutthebachelor.com)
3. We watched the 24 hours of video footage of ourselves watching the show (a reality TV show, of sorts, where we were the stars) and journaled about the hyper-surveilled and hyper-reflexive experience of "watching ourselves watch."

The data below present three conversations around "girl code," one from each layer of data generation. The first is set in my (Callie's) living room as Bobbie, Rose, and I watch the show as it aired weekly. The second is set online in the space of the blog (www.blogaboutthebachelor.com). You will meet Anita in the second conversation, a blogger who contributed weekly to our blog conversation with thoughtful critique and comments. Finally, the third conversation takes place back in my living room, after the conclusion of the season, as Bobbie, Rose and I watch the footage of ourselves watching the show.

From our "live" reactions when we first encountered a performance of girl code by one of the bachelorettes, to reflective blog entries, to hyper-reflexive critiques of our own interpretations of the code as we watch ourselves watch, our experiences of girl code are continually transformed. Not only were our understandings of girl code shaped by our dialogic interactions with one another and the bachelorettes on the show, but also by theorists who we were reading and thinking with throughout the study. Therefore,

included on the bottom half of the page during our first and second conversations (as we interact with girl code as presented by The Bachelor) are interjections of theory to be read along with and as a critical part of our conversations. The third conversation stands alone as we shift focus onto ourselves and our own experiences of girl code within the research setting.

Conversation One: Watching the Show

[Eight bachelorettes are on a group date with Sean. After an afternoon of roller derby, they are hanging out, having cocktails on an outside patio complete with a bar, posh seating nooks, and, of course, a hot tub. Sean approaches the group of women and whisks Lindsey away for some "alone time." This sends Tierra over an emotional cliff. The scene opens with a "confessional" scene of Tierra by herself. These confessional scenes are filmed after-the-fact and are oft-utilized rhetorical devices that let viewers in on the bachelorette's inner thoughts as she reflects on the drama of the night.]

Tierra: Girls need to start becoming women. I'm not gonna be bitter, nor am I gonna stoop to their level…. I'm better than that. I'm gonna focus on me and my connection with Sean. I'm not gonna let another girl stop me from getting what I want out of this.

Rose: Who's trying to stop you? She's nuts!

[Camera cuts back to the scene. Tierra and Sarah are sitting on a couch]

Sarah: Are you OK?

Tierra: No, and I'm about to walk out of here. I just don't like the environment, the girls, just everything. Like, I can't do this at all.

[Ashlee joins the two on the couch]

Sarah: Have you talked to Ashlee about this?

Tierra: No, I don't trust anybody here. I don't understand why no one gets that, and it is so annoying.

[Tierra stands up and storms off toward the camera crew]

Callie: Yes. Someone please let her leave. Get out of here, Tierra. You are straight up crazy, girl!

[Camera cuts to a shot of Sean making out with Lindsey.]

[Camera cuts to Tierra in a stairwell beginning to cry, her voice shanking]

Tierra: [to camera] I deserve so much more than this. Sean is a great guy, but why should I be tortured every day and live life uneasy?

Tierra: I can't take the fakeness from any of these girls anymore. It's just bullshit. It's just bullshit! [she begins to sob; Figure 1]

Rose: If it's really so "torturous" why in the hell haven't you left already??

Bobbie: I agree! No one should be somewhere where they don't feel wanted. If she feels that way, she needs to go.

The "Ideal" Woman

Dubrofsky (2011) has specifically critiqued The Bachelor as producing a "rationality"in which certain behaviors for women become naturalized through the discourse of "the ideal woman" who is ready for and worthy of love. Such rationality transmits social norms and gender expectations that propagate oppressive patriarchal domination. For Dubrofsky, The Bachelor Industry presents the ideal woman as compulsorily heterosexual; White; displaying a particular emotional state (in control, not too emotional but also vulnerable and open enough to 'find love'); having a certain type of beautiful body (thin, tan, and not too overtly sexual (read: slutty)); willing to accept a contradictory "empowered" state in which she can "be empowered through her choices, but give up power to her emotions and to a man who will make choices for her" (p. 131); and able to "accept that her man is not being monogamous, but make herself available only to him" (p.132).

Figure 1: Tierra in Tears

[Camera cuts back to the other girls who are supporting one another in collectively disliking Tierra's behavior]

Catherine: I am trying so hard to understand her. I'm trying so hard to be cordial.

[Camera cuts back to Tierra in the stairwell sobbing uncontrollably. Her mascara is running and she is gasping for air as she wails.]

Callie: Oh Lord, get it together sister [to Tierra]. You're gonna be embarrassed about this later.

These "ideal woman" messages can be seen as silently transmitted to women through the girl code. If one were to boil The Bachelor girl code down to its essential messages, it would be: "Thou shalt always be in control of one's emotions, and always get along with other women." In other words, as noted by Dubrofsky, the ideal woman should always be of a certain emotional state, always composed and under control, not "crazy." And, the ideal woman should always play nice with the other bachelorettes and be supportive no matter how contradictory this may seem (they are all going after the same man). Along with this part of the code comes the assumption that women should automatically be friends with one another. The Bachelor girl code is further explained and theorized in the following section.

Tierra: I can't take it. I *cannot* take it. [Snorts in-between sobs] I am breaking down inside and holding it all in….. Will I probably regret it? Absolutely. [Snort] But, I can't be tortured like this.

Bobbie: Really? How much are you really *holding it in?*

Rose and Callie: [Hilariously laughing]

The scene ends with Sean swooping in like a knight in shining armor. He gives her a rose (therefore guaranteeing her place on the show for another week) and consoles her. We rail against Sean's decision.

Conversation Two: Blogging about Our Experiences of Watching the Show

It's all about the Girl Code - By Bobbie

Girls have an uncanny ability to bond together even in competition. I know, many of you are cursing at your computer screen giving me examples of mean girls. I agree, they abound. But Mean Girls thrive in adolescence...before they learn the true girl code. Eventually, I think the majority of women--and the best adolescent girls-- come together and form supportive communities. Most of us love the camaraderie that we find with each other in playing on sports teams, getting ready for dates, and just supporting each other through the highs and lows of life. That's why girls who break the girl code of camaraderie get ostracized. Come on, don't we all have the same response to the girls who says, "All my friends are guys. I've just never gotten along with women, they're too much drama?" These are girls that we assume (perhaps falsely) are boy-obsessed, dramatic chicks who need to be the center of attention and completely lack the social skills to make friends with other girls.

This year it's Tierra. She comes in a long-line of Bachelor villains...Courtney. Vienna. I agree, it's pretty common to have a girl who is unwilling or unable to bond with other girls. But the casting agents and producers at the Bachelor seem to make sure we have one villain in every group...and she miraculously stays around for a while. Is this the guy's attraction to a sultry rebel? Is this ABC's influence that helps the villain stays around for a while? Do we as audience members need someone to hate?

Yes, I realize that one of the quickest paths to friendship is a common enemy. I'm not sure that makes me feel better. As a predominantly female audience, can't we be given the benefit that we will bond and watch the show without melodramatic highlights of catfights? Isn't it possible that we could watch the show without having predeclared archetypes thrust in our face? Really, are we such a brain-dead audience that we have to have women labeled and packaged for us? (Please don't answer this question ;)

Something tells me that I will never be hired as a producer for a reality TV show. It would likely lose a lot of money.

Reply: Rose 1/30/2013 1:15pm

Here is the one thing that I could not stop thinking...why does "that guy" always go for "that girl?" (Tierra.)

What is it about guys that makes them want "that" needy girl? Needless to say I am not a huge fan of Tierra. There was, however, one moment when I felt like she was being really authentic, and at that point, all three of us were quiet (a rare phenomenon:)). It was during the rose ceremony when she was apologizing to two of the women for her behavior. At that moment, I really liked Tierra. However, the very next second the producers showed a clip of her saying, "Hey, a girl's got to do what a girl's got to do." She was really just trying to save face. SUPER LAME.

The other thing about this scene that I found interesting is this innate desire we have to view truly authentic experiences. There have been several moments of this: Sarah being reunited with her dog (Sean had better not break her heart:)), seemingly this apology

Girl Code 1: Thou shalt be composed and in control of one's emotions (not "crazy").

"You've gotta hide your crazy" –Selma, Women Tell All Episode

> The very image of an unruly, leaky, out-of-bounds woman, in and of itself, is disruptive and offers an opening for a critique. Might the 'unruliness' of the women in the BI [Bachelor Industry]….with their excessiveness, their violation of the codes of femininity, position them to provide a critique of the series and its rigid parameters for appropriate feminine displays? (Dubrofsky, 2011, p. 85)

I (Callie) grew up in the South, where this piece of girl code was delivered through the phrase, "put a smile on your face and deal with it." While it is often thought that boys are taught to self-censor their emotions and girls are typically taught to express their emotions, there is an obvious limit for female emotional expression as demonstrated within The Bachelor. The bachelorette who does not self-censor and

moment with Tierra, and maybe one or two others. These are the moments that make us stop, listen, and wonder if what is being said is a performance at all, but actually truly authentic. I think it is in these ways that we can connect deeper to the reality TV that we are viewing.

Reply: Callie 1/30/2013 2:00pm

Tierra's shenanigans. Rose, I agree. I really have no patience for that nonsense.

I guess I just expect girls to be tough. It is one of my pet peeves when a girl acts pitiful or plays weak or dumb in order to get a guy. Although, I do admit, I have done all of these things before. "I'm cold" (So he will have to put his arm around you, or be all chivalrous and give you a jacket) or "I can't lift this, it is so heavy" (so that he will have a chance to show his strength) or "I don't know, what do you think?" (even if I really do

who lets her emotions out in "messes" of audible sobbing, melting mascara, and dripping snot or in confrontational shouting bouts with fists pumping, eyebrows raised, and less-than-pretty scowling generally becomes the center of the show's storyline. She becomes a spectacle on which the producers capitalize. Carnivalizing such displays of emotion can lead viewers to write such behavior off as "crazy," or not within the "normal" realm of how one should perform one's gender if the desire is to be "fit for love."

Calling the unruly woman, "*that* girl" is a discursive technique similar to calling criminals "monsters" or "murderers," (Conquergood, 2002) in that viewers can distance themselves from such women, removing unruly performances from the realm of the possible, and, thereby, disciplining one another to act a certain way. Ultimately, this creates a certain habitus. Dubrofsky (2011) uses a metaphor from pornography, the "money shot," to describe the uncontrollable display of emotion by women on *The Bachelor.*

know).

But then again, there are times when I'm like, "nope, I got it, I can do this! I am a strong chick!" Or, "Actually, I think Foucault was talking about...." So I guess there is a limit in my mind to the amount of "pitiful" strategy a girl should ever use. Probably, we shouldn't do it at all.

Toughen up Tierra....take that princess crown off....it's unbecoming!

Reply: Anita 01/30/2013 2:14pm

Bobbie,

I love the "Girl Code" and I know what you mean about girls bonding together in the midst of competition. I mean, think about how most of the girls spend a majority of their time...in the company of the other women. In order for that place to NOT be awkward

Unlike the celebratory nature of the male money-shot (the visual display of a male's ejaculation) in pornography, which is meant to turn viewers on, the female money shot in The Bachelor is a turn-off and signals to viewers that a woman can no longer control her emotions and that she has thus become "unfit" for love. While both money shots are "the moment you have all been waiting for," the female money shot in The Bachelor is like gawking at a train wreck rather than a moment of visceral sexual satisfaction.

> Perhaps the 'money shot' here illustrates the fear, in mainstream heterosexual U.S. culture, of sexually alluring, intense, and emotional women. Located in the female body, the shot represents anxiety about sexually attractive women losing control of their emotions. This is a tried and true trope for women in popular culture. However, the ingenuity of the 'money shot' in the BI [Bachelor Industry] is that it disciplines women by enacting a cautionary tale about the dangers of losing control of one's emotions. In so doing, it recruits women into the job of governing the behavior of other women. Women provide the 'bad' example (and suffer the consequences) to offer lessons for female viewers on how to properly govern the self. (Dubrofsky, 2011, p. 89)

as hell for everyone, they play nice with each other. I do believe that some of the girls form friendships they will keep even after the show is over.

Tierra is definitely the villainess this season. I wonder if our need for there to always be a villain or villainess is ingrained in us. I mean think about every fairytale you've ever heard of in your life. There's always a hero or heroine and a villain or villainess and in the end the heroine always triumphs over the villainess. Snow White and the Snow Queen; Aurora (Sleeping Beauty) and Maleficent; Cinderella and Lady Tremaine; Ariel and Ursula and the list goes on. I think that's why Courtney (last season) being chosen at the end created such an outcry. How dare he choose that b*%@h!! That's NOT how the story is supposed to go!! It would be like if Ariel hadn't gotten to the ship on time and the fake Ursula had actually married Eric (not that Ben can really be compared to Prince Eric, neither can Sean for that matter, but still you get my point).

So the recipe remains:
someone to root for + someone to hate = entertaining TV drama

Dubrofsky explains that when female viewers see the money shot in *The Bachelor*, a strong, bodily reaction takes place similar to when one sees a male's money shot in pornography. However, rather than sexual arousal, the intense visceral response is to punish the woman who has crossed the line and lost control.

Finally, the "realness" of the money shot in *The Bachelor* and on other reality TV shows, according to Dubrofsky (2011), lies in the surveillance. The bachelorettes have submitted themselves to surveillance (as did we, as researchers in this study), and even with the knowledge of the surveillance, they still cannot control their emotions (just as we could not at times). This reinforces the audience's belief in the powerful "authenticity" of the emotions and the girl code violation. It also reifies the viewers' needs to discipline such displays.

Reply: Bobbie 01/30/2013 9:50pm

Anita-
Your recipe says it all!!! I only can hope that is why we root for some of the best traits~friendly, intelligent, fun & all-around fabulous. And why we boo off the traits we all hope to reject within ourselves~ greed, deceit, empty-headed seduction. I like the idea that we cheer on our best traits as we see them in others and hate on the traits As we see them in others and hate on the traits that we really don't like to see in ourselves or others. You got me feeling like there is some deep benefit for us cheering on the good and cursing the bad. :D

Reply: Callie 01/31/2013 7:01pm

I think there is a benefit in cheering on the "good" or the girl in whom we find similar traits.

However, what happens when that girl loses, and the "villain" wins....like Courtney? I think this is what I was getting at in my last comment (below).

Last season, I LOVED Emily because she was a PhD student and creative (remember her raps) and I wanted to see a really smart chick win. I also loved Kacie B. because of her southern-ness. However, obviously both of them lost. My response was, "Ben you are wack!"

Rowe (1997), through her studies of "unruly" women on TV, offers another perspective on this aspect of girl code. For Rowe, unruly women like Roseann Barr have the potential to subvert boundaries around "normal" feminine performances (in effect, breaking or expanding the code).

> Through body and speech, the unruly woman violates the unspoken feminine sanction against 'making a spectacle' of herself. I see the unruly woman as the prototype of woman as subject—transgressive above all when she lays claim to her own desire.…The disruptive power of these women—carnivalesque and carnivalized contains much potential for feminist appropriation. Such an appropriation could enable us to problematize two areas critical to feminist theories of spectatorship and the subject: the social and cultural norms of femininity, and our understanding of how we are constructed as gendered subjects. (Rowe, 1997, pp. 76-77)

I guess I could have had a range of responses. For example, a message could be sent to me that the "good girls" or the "girls that are like me" (PhD students) are not fit for love. I guess this might be a bit extreme, but I am just trying to think through the "fallout" when you cheer for a girl who is "like you" and then watch another one "win the bachelor's heart?" Do you think there is ever a 'real' emotional effect or even a physical effect on viewers? I'm betting so. Thoughts?

Reply: Callie 01/31/2013 6:51pm

Bobbie,

Your point and questions about whether or not we need a packaged villain to consume in order for interesting TV to happen made me feel kinda bad, because I was like, "so true! Half the fun for me is bashing the other girls....finding the ridiculous girl to put all of our hatin' onto is fun!" Then I was like, "What is wrong with me? Why do I take such pleasure in putting these other women down?" Now I'm wondering, "What does all this collective hatin' have to do with the 'girl code?'" In order to be part of a collective community, do we have to have some sort of "beef" with something 'Other?' Does that beef with something 'Other' discipline us (and our group of girlfriends) into not acting like whatever we are making fun of?

Anita,

Then, I read your piece on the fairy tales and the built-in villain and I felt a little better about my blood-lust for hatin' on some ridiculous chick. Is The Bachelor much more like "scripted TV" than we think because it does indeed present the narrative storyline as you outline in your post? I think so! And, as we (Bobbie and Rose) talked about...is it all about casting in order to make sure that your recipe occurs? In this way, can we really even call it "reality TV?" What about "puppeted TV?"

Girl Code 2: Thou shalt support and get along with other girls by always "playing nice."

"My sister told me if a girl cannot get along with other girls, that's trouble. This is turning into a nightmare." –Sean (on Tierra) Episode 7

Every season of *The Bachelor*, viewers meet at least one bachelorette who cannot get along with the other women in the house. This "mean girl" says something along the

Reply: Bobbie 02/02/2013 7:25pm

So when I think of the girl code, I think of social psychology stuff. Male societies generally are focused on a strong alpha male. In circles of guys, there tends to be a hierarchy with a leader and a social pecking order. Female communities tend to focus less on social hierarchies and tend to be more communal.

So when in a community (i.e. the bachelor mansion), most women tend to pool together for support, even if they are in competition. I think competitive gymnastics is an awesome example of this phenomenon. It is a harsh individual competition--they are directly competing for ranking/medals against each other, but *wow* they pull together to support each other individually, as well as team. They embody support for each other as teammates while being strong individual competitors. Think of this summer's Olympics, Kayla Maroney made national headlines when she made a face of mild disdain when she fell (literally) to second place. Making this mild face was so out of the norm in the supportive girl world that it made national headlines--and became a joke of an ungraceful emotional moment (see http://mckaylaisnotimpressed.tumblr.com/).

In my view, we all love hanging out with girlfriends because of the support we get. It's totally cool to hang out with guys—sometimes or even most of the time—as long as you are supportive to other chicks when you are with them.

Ever watch dogs at a dog park? They do this little thing called a play bow. When they meet another dog they sniff and circle, then if they want to play, they do a bow of

lines of, "I'm not here to make friends. I'm here for (fill in the name of the bachelor here)." Red flag. This statement indicates that the bachelorette has trouble getting along. with other girls and foreshadows her ostracization not only by the other bachelorettes with whom she is sharing a house and a man, but also by the viewers. She is breaking the "play nice, get along, and be supportive" girl code as epitomized by the traditional *Bachelor* storyline. Even though there are 25 women (who have never met one another) living in one house, competing for one man, there is an unwritten expectation that the women in the house will all be friends and support one another. The message: girls=supportive/boys=competitive; girls=collective and

submission to the other dog. It means, “I'm not going to hurt or attack you, I want to wrestle, play, chase and be friends.”

We do the same as girls, we meet each other at a party or social gathering, we chit-chat and frequently do a little play bow by giving a sincere complement or noting our admiration of their interest, accomplishments or style…. Some comment that shows we are impressed by the other woman and have no intention on putting her down. We then start down the road of a supportive relationship. We all love working with women who play bow, we instantly think of them as cool—i.e., a woman who is kind, fun and not focused on negative gossip, backstabbing or stealing boyfriends. So really, in totality, the girl code is defined as "not being a self-centered b*%#@."

Reference: All definitions in this post are sourced from Bobbiekipedia (2013). My go-to imaginary source for all information that I'm too lazy to look up.

Reply: Bobbie 02/02/2013 7:26pm

Callie,
Do you really enjoy hating on the women who are acting as the villain? I always viewed it as a collective groan. Yes, all of the viewers G~R~O~A~N~E~D when Courtney was chosen over Emily (who was quirky, intelligent, and fun!) I don't remember liking to hate Courtney, instead I felt let down by the entire male species for choosing women who like to play games, vie for power and use seduction like a Napoleonic conquest. I really love when at the end of the season I truly believe the Bachelor couple is going to dance and delight in love. And yep, it is extra sweet if it's a girl that we resonate with or aspire to be.

collaborative/boys=individualistic is taught from a young age through informal lessons on how to play with toys and with one another.

Remix artist, Jonathan McIntosh, offers an interactive critical portrayal of LEGO commercials aimed at boys and girls (gendered remix tool: http://www.genderremixer.com/lego/). Users can remix video from LEGO commercials for girls with audio from LEGO commercials for boys and vice-versa. All of the LEGO products aimed at girls are called LEGO “Friends” whereas the ones aimed at boys include LEGO “Star Wars,” “Super Heroes,” and “Alien Conquest.”

Reply: Callie 02/04/2013 12:37pm

OK, I don't think I like hating on the women who act as villains, but I think I do (ashamed) like the poking fun of other women piece. I like being like, "Who says that?" or "Who wears that?" or "This is so ridiculous, she needs to get it together."

I too like it when the season ends with a couple that I think are actually "meant to be" together. But, I also like the hilarity and ridiculousness that ensues in the in-between. I realize that this makes me sound like Cruella DeVille (I am getting my kicks out of making fun of other women).

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Maybe I like it because I get to stop self-censoring. Maybe it is some sort of an outlet for me to act a bit less civilized....a bit more "trashy." I don't know. Part of me thinks that these women have signed up to be judged by the public.....I keep digging myself

Competitive fighting scenes promoting boys' LEGOS are juxtaposed with scenes of girls playing nicely together, making friends, and having tea. Within *The Bachelor*, the same code prevails as it does with the LEGOS. A girl who cannot play nicely with other girls is not "fit for love." Viewers do not want to see the "mean girl" "win" and end up happy with a man, as that does not fit the script that female viewers have been taught. But, then again, the way in which girls play with LEGOS along with the ways in which women watch *The Bachelor* and perform research can shift those very same scripts.

into a hole....I don't know why I think it is fun to laugh at these women's clothes/actions/emotions.

But it somehow is.

Isn't that how this TV show gets is ratings? There have got to be other women out there like me right? Maybe we are focusing our negative energy from problems from our work days on these women. Maybe, like voodoo dolls, we are cursing our outside problems or our own insecurities?

Conversation Three: Watching the Footage of Ourselves Watching the Show

[Watching video-taped footage of yourself watching reality TV and making some not-so-nice comments (though sometimes, perhaps, humorous) about the bachelorettes can be a painful process. It gets rougher when you have to watch yourself get into a verbal disagreement with the co-researchers with whom you are watching and researching. Watching your own surveilled performance forces you to re-live the cringe-worthy moment again and re-think your own bad behavior. Rather than, "let's forget it and move on," watching and re-living is a hyper-reflexive moment that can both rip open old wounds and, at the same time, possibly work to heal them.

The conversation below happened as we tried to make sense of a moment in which the three of us found ourselves harshly disagreeing[4], in which we were neither playing nice with one another nor were we in control of our emotions. We were fueled by wine and the pressure of constant surveillance and expressed frustration with tears, silence, or resisting tears. As we watched ourselves watch, we recognized the parallels between our own process of deciphering girl code with one another and the bachelorette's reality TV experiences (and viewing experiences when the show airs). Below, we discuss in particular why The Bachelor's version of the girl code, in which one can add women and stir and expect them all to play nice, may not work.]

Rose: For me, this whole experience has been an emotional roller coaster, because I have to play a role, but that role I am playing has been influenced by many of my previous experiences which I do not feel like I have had time, or maybe desire, to share yet. So you two don't really have any real background as to where I am coming from, you know? It is hard to create a level of support and community without time to get to know one another. Also, because it is the first year of my Ph.D., I am trying to balance a new romantic relationship, with a new Ph.D. program, with this new research project, and with trying to make new girlfriends in a new place. That has been pretty damn

[4] See Spencer (2014) for an in-depth discussion of this disagreement and the ramifications for the research process. For the purpose of this paper, the nitty-gritty details of the disagreement are not presented as they are not essential for understanding the ways in which we navigated girl-code.

stressful.

Callie: Yeah, I agree with what you said about creating community quickly. One thing that I am noticing as we re-watch is that we are desperately trying to get to know one another, as girlfriends, on an intimate level at an alarmingly quick pace. It seems like the first few episodes of the show, we barely shut up enough to actually pay attention to the bachelorettes. We were constantly (perhaps nervously) commenting on the show. I was trying to be funny because that it what I default to when I want to make friends. Then, we became intimate with one another shockingly quickly with conversations about our partners, body image, sex, bra size, our issues at work, and contraception happening in the first few episodes.

Rose: And, frankly, some of that made me uncomfortable.

Bobbie: Well, and that pace just isn't realistic. This research process has had many parallels to The Bachelor. The bachelorettes have to fall in love quickly. They get to know one another and the bachelor so fast. They have to have a presumed trust in doing so and must become vulnerable quickly in both their friendships and their romantic relationships. In "real life" it doesn't generally work that way. But, it felt that way often in this research process. We had a very short time to get to know one another and to become pretty open and vulnerable. I know sometimes I went home and thought, "maybe I shouldn't have said that…."

Callie: I for sure went home several times and re-hashed our moments together. I do admit, since it was my idea, and since it is my dissertation, I have felt a great deal of pressure in making sure that it goes well and that you two are having a good time, that it doesn't become a chore, and that the process stays as collaborative as possible. It is funny, one of the assumptions that I had going into this research project, which I wasn't even aware of, was that the three of us would automatically like one another, get along, and be great friends. Not saying that we aren't, or won't be, but I think I underestimated the "time-factor" that you both bring up in the process of becoming friends.

Bobbie: Well, and for me, there was a level of judgment that I felt. I saw many parallels between the bachelorettes' surveilled living situation, in particular the ways in which we (and other viewers) were judging them, and then the ways in we, ourselves, were being judged. We were being judged by Callie, being judged by a strong dissertation committee, being judged by blog readers, being judged by circles of colleagues….All of that comes with anxiety. But then again, judgment also comes with a kind of acceptance. The whole thing is like a sorority house. We judged each bachelorette on how much the other women in the house accepted her. We cheered on the "girl's girl" in a normalist way. Then again, here [in the research space], we find an acceptance of sorts when we collectively agree upon our judgment of a particular woman's behavior, for example, on our collective dislike of Tierra's inauthenticity. We also can't help but feel judged by committees, readers, bloggers, etc. on how well we are "getting along with the other girls in the house" and on how we are reading the performances of the bachelorettes. It is another level of being in a fishbowl.

Rose: For sure. And, for me, that judgment comes on the heels of trying to navigate my first year of my Ph.D. degree in which I feel judged in many ways in that environment too.

Callie: Well, and I feel responsible for putting us all in a fishbowl. I will say that I dreaded watching myself watch. Because right now we are watching ourselves in the fishbowl and that ain't always pretty. The re-watch has been mostly funny, my sides in stiches as I say, "who says that?" about my own comments and antics. But then there are parts where I am like, "damn, I was rude or a coward or a bitch!" And then again, the re-watch has given me some space for mending as I get to critique my own performances, re-perform them in a sense and say, "I wish I had done that differently."

Rose: Ideally, if we were to have the whole thing to do over again, we would have spent time building friendships first, without The Bachelor, without TV at all. Trying to watch the show, comment on it, get to know one another, and trying to make friends was tough. It was like, we would bring up this fury of conversation during the two minute commercials, and then we would be interrupted by the show coming back on. By the time the next commercial came around, we would already be on another topic. That was a frustrating way to have a conversation, especially when we were all talking really fast and at once, trying to get words in edgewise. Sometimes I felt interrupted, unheard.

Bobbie: And we are all in different places in our careers (1st year Ph.D., A.B.D., and Ph.D.), and wanted to do the project for a variety of reasons, so there was different levels of buy-in. We are all also in different places in our lives and we wanted to meet each other's needs for "girlfriend time." However, there wasn't space or time for us to support each other or for us to offer advice or even really hear each other. That is why collaborative research is hard to do when the researchers don't already know one another intimately. We had to create our own "girl code" as researchers, and we needed time to do so.

Parting Thoughts (Conversation While Collaborating on this Manuscript)

Callie: A funny thing that I am noticing now that we have written this piece is that in our third conversation, during the re-watch, we were agreeing with one another much more than we were disagreeing. We were using critique to pacify the situation, to "play nice," with one another after an argument. Maybe even after we critiqued the "add women to a house, stir, and they should all get along" girl code mantra of The Bachelor, we were indeed trying to make such a thing happen in our research. Is girl code more ingrained in the form of habitus than we can even imagine?

Bobbie: One of the most profound things I saw during this process was each of our different responses to conflict. Callie has an amazing way of unleashing conversation on a controversial topic and then taking a front row seat to see the sparks fly. I had to completely laugh when I saw that happen in this paper (Callie wrote the intro to the re-

watching section and chose the clips of data)! Callie references hyper-reflexive moments when we were at each other's throats, but yet this paper doesn't openly discuss any of those points of conflict. To me, our responses to the bachelorette's dress or emotional expression that provoked our initial points of disagreement are of minimal interest. What is of more interest is how three colleagues and friends work through conflict in a research project. The girl code emphasizes decency, manners, and courtesy. We teach young girls to "play nice," but as they grow up they are faced with tougher challenges of how to work through differences in a way that fosters both respect and individuation. For one girl, conflict resolution at a deeper level may hold the greatest importance. Another girl may value avoidance of conflict. I don't believe that the three of us ever came to a mutual decision on how to handle conflicts that arose in the research; however, we seem to continually value basic respect and playing nice. I believe it was both our commitment to the research activity and a legitimate enjoyment of each other's company that helped us smooth over differences and re- focus on our mutual respect for one another after we had harsh differences. I think no one wanted to create an odd-girl out, so we generally dropped disagreements and never worked through them at a deeper level.

Watching yourself on video in a social situation is a humbling and sometimes agonizing process. For me, I saw traits that I disdain in myself. We each struggled with personal regrets when we watched ourselves. I think it was this mutual humility that brought out a communal desire to be kind and supportive to each other, no matter our differences. Bachelor contestants rarely get to show their humility due to being in a full-performance venue. As researchers and girlfriends, we had a safer place to show our vulnerability in reflecting on our performance than the Bachelor women are afforded.

Rose: I had a teary-eyed moment (I know, ironic, hunh?) as I re-read our paper. I was reflecting on our process and experiences, and what it means for young women to grow up with girl code today. I was thinking of my niece and all the young women in our lives… the world can be rough. To have gone through conflict with you ladies, and to have had tough conversations makes me hope and pray they (girls of the 21st century) have those same experiences...time with critically-minded women who actually give a shit to challenge what society tell us about "what it means to be a woman."

When I reflected specifically upon conflict in our research process, I found myself "going along to get along" (a phrase Bobbie and I recently discussed) often. But then I realized that through conflict we learn more about each other and ourselves as individuals. I guess I know I can only really speak for myself.

Honestly, this vulnerable research process is scary (knowing that all of you reading this are likely on my committee, mentors, friends, future colleagues, current colleagues). For me, this was a real and raw experience, and figuring out how to express it is likely even more challenging than the process itself. At the same time, girl code does exist and women are faced with challenges of how to navigate the code every day. So, this research, this project, deconstructing girl code, experiencing conflict, and striving towards better friendships…it was all worth it if "we" have come to understand

ourselves and the world around us better as we spend time critiquing the ways in which we perform girl code.

Callie: Yes, I think that we opened up Pandora's Box just for a little peek without giving the reader a full view of its contents. I guess I should say "I" rather than "we," as I am singularly responsible for writing the intro to the third conversation and selecting excerpts from our data. But, I wonder if it is necessary to describe the nitty-gritty details of our disagreement? I am still wrestling with what is to be gained (via learning opportunities for ourselves and our audiences) versus the harm done (via damaged friendships and emotional pain) in vulnerably and candidly presenting the "warts and all" of the tiff we had. In providing the raw details of the drama between the three of us, are we giving our readers the same "money shot" which is responsible for making The Bachelor producers rich? Can we still provoke thought and incite critical questioning around our interactions with and production of girl code without opening Pandora's Box?

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CHAPTER VI

ARTICLE IV: "WORKING THE RUINS" OF COLLABORATIVE FEMINIST RESEARCH

Abstract

In this paper, I enact an "inquiry among the ruins" (St. Pierre & Pillow, 2000b, p. 1) of a collaborative feminist duoethnography. Through the process of exploring instances of failure, I aim to (re)think "collaborative" research, feminist goals for collaborative research, and a space for such research in the academy. As I work the ruins of a duoethnography, I read failures as a series of paradoxical "betrayals" (Visweswaran, 1994, p. 40) in hopes of being "accountable to complexity" (Lather, 2007) so as to open up spaces for new ways of theorizing and practicing collaborative feminist research.

"Working the Ruins" of Collaborative Feminist Research

> Failure is not just a sign of epistemological crisis (for it is indeed also that), but also, I would argue, an epistemological construct. Failure signals a project that may no longer be attempted, or at least not on the same terms. (Visweswaran, 1994, pp. 99-100)

Gina: It is your *dissertation. So, over the dissertation that you write, you do have power. At any point you could kick us to the curb and say, "screw you, I'm gonna use it [the data] the way I want." But, then again, I could also take what I want and run off and write my own blog and have a counter-blog. So you have to acknowledge the inevitable power differentials, but then once you kind of shift away from that, you realize there is*

radical trust. And, I do trust you. I trust that you won't splice and dice, and put our comments together in a way to say, "see, aren't they the bitches!"

Gina, Ava, and I met for tacos and beer in order to discuss our upcoming collaborative study. Our goal was to duoethnographically explore how we challenged, (re)produced, assigned, and constructed gendered subjectivities both for ourselves and for other women through our performances within leisure spaces surrounding the 17th season of ABC's *The Bachelor*. In three layers of data-generative surveillance, we planned to (a) videotape ourselves watching the show; (b) publicly reflect about our experiences of watching the show in a blog (www.blogaboutthebachelor.com); and, (c) spend a weekend together watching the videotape of ourselves watching the show (a hyper-reflexive experience). Our conversation in the prestudy meeting focused on logistics of the collective duoethnographic research process, as all three of us were at the same time researchers and researched: Who would own the data? How were we going to collectively write the final piece? What would we do if one or more of us had a larger "buy-in?" How would we ensure that we protected our personal relationships with one another through the vulnerable process of intense, multilayered surveillance? After collectively outlining how we planned to navigate each of the above issues, I left the pre-study meeting feeling excited to embark upon this research "journey" (yes, a *Bachelor* reference) with these two co-researchers. I thought that, through the dialogic act of openly addressing these issues prestudy, we were already enacting a different sort of feminist research, a more horizontal, equitable, collaborative sort. This open dialogue aligned with my feminist intentions for this radically collaborative research project. I

thought that I had chosen a "better" methodology that would allow us to do "better" feminist research.

After a disagreement during the study resulting in friendships shaken and feelings hurt, one colleague went through the motions of completing the study, but withdrew herself from full participation. Despite my best intentions to create a leveling collaborative feminist research scenario in a non-high-risk environment (we were studying ourselves watching reality TV), we all left with some level of iatrogenic harm. My first reaction was to enter into a state of near-paralysis: Without complete buy-in from all three of us, how would/could we continue? How would we/I write about our experiences?

Now, several months after *The Bachelor* finale and the "completion"[1] of our study, as I sit down alone to write this paper (a fact, on its own, indicative of the failure of my feminist intentions for a radically collaborative co-authored research project), I am ruminating on the events that transpired, on the moment when communication, relationships, methodology, the dream of collaboration, and feminist principles began to crack. Rather than try to smooth over or fix the cracks (which I already attempted futilely), I have decided to dwell in the cracks in order to, as St. Pierre and Pillow (2000a) suggest, "work the ruins" in an attempt to "produce different knowledge and produce knowledge differently" (p. 1).

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[1] I put completion in quotes here because even though we "officially" stopped generating data via the methods outlined in the original plan for the study, the three of us continue to navigate our relationships with one another and what it means to perform collaborative feminist research. With each conversation, the study continues and we generate more "data."

As I "use the data the way I want" (as Gina warned) by authoring this piece alone,[2] I am ethically, emotionally, and physically torn as each word materializes on the page. How can I stick to feminist principles that I have already betrayed and that have so completely betrayed me? How can I continue to work within a methodology that I have betrayed and has betrayed me? And, most importantly, how can I honor the work that I have done with two women without betraying them even more on these pages? In this paper, as I inhabit the cracks in our project and work through examples of failure, I want to make my intentions clear: My intentions are not to "splice and dice" Gina's or Ava's words (or my own for that matter) in order to say, "see aren't they the bitches." Nor do I want to use our failures to suggest some sort of practical methodological solution in the form of problem-solving advice. Lather (2007) has already pointed out that, when feminist intentions fail, "the assumption that 'better' methodology means better accounts, breaks down" (p. 38). I also do not intend for "dwelling in cracks," "working ruins," and "exploring failure" to be a cathartic, self-wallowing confessional. Instead, I intend to use our failures to rethink "collaborative" research, feminist goals for collaborative research, and a space for such research in the academy. I will begin by discussing the feminist call for "collaborative research" and the ways in which this call aligns with a duoethnographic methodology. Next, I will outline the theoretical locations from which I base my critique: epistemologies of ruins and reading betrayals. In the second half of the paper, I narrate an instance of failure in the duoethnography and read (as betrayals) the many cracks that can be seen as emanating from that scene.

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[2] Because I have decided to "go rogue," I have chosen to use pseudonyms to protect both Ava and Gina as I discuss our experiences from my own viewpoints.

The Hopeful Promise of "Collaborative" Feminist Research

A central theme in feminist inquiry to date[3] has been the issue of knowledge production. "Whose knowledges? Where and how obtained, by whom, from whom, and for what purposes?" (Olesen, 2011, p. 129). Specifically, feminist scholars have worked to disrupt the authority of the researcher as projected in patriarchal hierarchical science. The trend has been toward more relational, collaborative, ethically responsible knowledge production. In order to enact such projects, feminists have worked to blur the line between researcher and researched and acknowledge the co-constructed nature of knowledge production (Behar & Gordon, 1995; Kahn, 2005; Lather & Smithies, 1997; Lather, 2007; Lincoln 1993, 1997). In doing so, the nature of "voice" has come into question (MacLure, 2009; Mazzei, 2003; Mazzei, 2004; Mazzei, 2009; Mazzei & Jackson, 2009). In efforts to create a more relational and less exploitive research, feminists ask, how do we responsibly incorporate and represent participants' voices (see Behar, 1993; Lather & Smithies, 1997; Richardson, 1997)? In order to accomplish such goals, feminist research has been trending toward more collaborative research, generally following one of two designs: 1) two or more researchers collaborating to jointly pursue a research project with participants or 2) a researcher collaborating with participants in all aspects of the research process from planning to publication.[4]

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[3] Poststructural feminists suggest the next movement in feminist inquiry is away from epistemology and toward ontology, imagining "what's next" with ideas of "post-qualitative inquiry" (Lather, 2013a; Lather & St. Pierre, 2013; St. Pierre, 2011, 2013) and a focus on "becoming" (St. Pierre, 2013), "researching without representation" (MacLure, 2013), "feminist materialism" (Taguchi, 2013), and "posthumanist research" (Mazzei, 2013) using "mangling practices" (Greene, 2013; Youngblood Jackson, 2013).

[4] Examples of this format of collaborative research are participatory action research (see Creese & Frisby, 2012; Reason & Bradbury, 2008; Writers & Nagar, 2006) and performance ethnography (see Conquergood, 1982, 2002, 2006; Denzin, 2003, 2006; Madison, 1998, 2006a, 2006b, 2008), which are often community-based and are increasingly popular feminist methodologies.

"Collaboration" is a buzz-word appearing not only in feminist research, but also in the academy. Interdisciplinary collaboration is touted and collaborative projects (whether across disciplines or with community members) often receive preference for grant funding. Collaboration, like "sustainability, seems like something that everyone is "for" without taking the time to explore what it means (Bassett, 2012), how it is performed (Richardson, 1996), or its implications (Rhee, 2013). While there is no one correct definition, Rhoades' (2000) effort captures many shared sentiments surrounding collaboration within a feminist research context:

> Collaboration encourages shared decision-making, prizes cooperative initiatives, strives for egalitarian interactions, values multiple perspectives, and attempts to mediate power imbalances between the researcher and the researched. It extends from a conviction that feminist research for and about women is most effectively accomplished when women join forces with each other to form communal rather than hierarchical models for scholarship. (p. 137)

Alongside the wave of collaborative research projects within feminist research are numerous critiques highlighting shortcomings in collaborative methodologies attempting to achieve feminist goals. For example, collaborative interaction with participants may, ironically, reintroduce ethical dilemmas feminists were trying to avoid by making participants feel alienated, deceived, exploited, and disappointed when the researcher (who is always still in power) changes directions within the project, moves on, or fails to meet expectations for an egalitarian relationship (Acker, Barry, & Esseveld, 1996; Addison & McGee, 1999; Gorelick, 1991; Scantlebury & LeVan, 2006). Due to the vulnerable nature of an open collaborative process, Cotterill (1992) cautions against the "potentially damaging effects of a research technique which encourages friendship in order to focus on very private and personal aspects of people's lives" (p. 527). Villenas (1996) warns that, even in cases when researchers from marginalized populations study

with their "own people," it is possible for the researcher to face what she calls the "colonized/colonizer dilemma" (p. 712) as she uses her privileged "educated researcher" status to approach a population. Alvarez (2013) echoes Villenas's sentiments in describing her place in collaborative fieldwork with "my people" (p. 49) and in the academy as "a marginalized intellectual who can operate both in the 'hood or barrio' and the academy, but not a legitimate member of either" (p. 51). Alvarez points, also, to harm that can come to the researcher as she attempts to collaborate and is left feeling doubly alienated. And, finally, Kirsh (2005) speaks to the difference between *friendship* and *friendliness* in relational feminist fieldwork. She suggests that having realistic expectations and constant open communication surrounding the level of intimacy with participants—friend*ly* rather than friend*ship*—may help decrease the possibility of iatrogenic emotional harm resulting from disappointment, feelings of exploitation, and broken trust.

As I read feminist accounts and critiques of collaborative research, I saw two ways in which I thought feminists were falling short of the goals to blur the line between the researcher and the participant in order to "strive for egalitarian interactions" and "mediate power imbalances," as noted by Rhoades (2000):

1. There was still a "researcher" and "participants." Even in studies dealing with researchers in collaboration, the researchers were studying other people/texts and collaborating to conduct the research and write the final product.
2. Even though researchers strived to include participant voices, the pieces were not co-authored.[5]

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[5] An example of this is Lather and Smithies' (1997) *Troubling the Angels*, a beautiful example of a radical way to include participants' words in collaborative research without making the women "consumable" through a linear "easy read." This piece has been formative to my thinking as an example of "good" collaborative feminist work. The one place where I think the piece could improve is in listing the women living with HIV/AIDS with whom they research as co-authors.

I chose duoethnography as a way to methodologically improve upon these issues by involving multiple researchers and working with all participants as co-researchers and co-authors. Duoethnography has the potential to radically blur the researcher/researched line, allows researchers to be hyper-reflexive, and can create a more equitable collaborative process. Therefore, intellectually, duoethnography aligns well with feminist collaborative research goals (Spencer & Paisley, 2013). It is a happy marriage between the potentially narcissistic "navel gazing" of autoethnography and the potentially exploitative tendencies of ethnography.

Duoethnography

Duoethnography (Norris, 2008; Norris, Sawyer, & Lund, 2012; Sawyer, & Norris, 2013) is a relatively new methodology that has only been used in a handful of studies. I was drawn to duoethnography because of the work of the *duo:* Just like "auto" or "critical," "duo" is a modifier that when added to the word "ethnography," shifts how we *think* and how we *do* ethnography. The *duo* highlights the constructed nature of knowledge production, values myriad perspectives, and signifies a blurring[6] of the researcher/researched dichotomy. In duoethnography, there are no participants as all parties involved are, literally, "researchers." Each researcher studies herself (in a autoethnographic sense) *in conjunction* with the other researcher(s) (in an ethnographic sense) in order to explore experiences of a phenomenon such as watching *The Bachelor.* That being said, most importantly, an ethical stance of reciprocal trust between

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[6] I use *blurs* here rather than *dissolves* because through my experience enacting duoethnographies, there is always a power dynamic existent in the relationship between the researchers, whether that be prior research experience, commitment level, or ownership of the project (see LeFevre, & Sawyer, 2012; Sitter & Hall, 2012).

researchers is imperative. Duoethnographies result in dialogic and polyvocal narratives that are necessarily co-authored. The individual voices of each duoethnographer remain present in order to disrupt any one metanarrative of the experience and leave a space for readers to enter the conversation. The value or validity of a duoethnography is not in truth claims or objectivity but in depth of reflexivity, which should occur throughout the research process. With this in mind, duoethnographies must be accessibly written so audience members can insert their own narrative alongside (or against) those juxtaposed by the duoethnographers. In this way, duoethnography can blur the theory/practice dichotomy.

As I discuss failures in the next two sections, I want to be clear that I am not disbanding duoethnography, nor am I blaming the failures of this research project solely on the methodology. Duoethnographic tenets have the potential to align well with feminist projects, and can be a useful framework for conducting collaborative research. However, despite the efforts outlined in the opening paragraph, and what I saw as a "radically" collaborative research methodology, the project failed my feminist intentions in many ways. There were cracks, breaks, hurt feelings, silenced voices, and angry silences.

"Epistemologies of Ruins"

As Visweswaran (1994) states in the opening quote, "Failure signals a project that may no longer be attempted, or at least not on the same terms" (p. 100). The act of dwelling in the cracks (failures/ruins) of our duoethnography leads to an understanding of not only the mechanics (methodology and methods) of the project that can no longer be attempted, but also to an investigation of the terms upon which the project was built,

namely collaborative feminist research. I argue that our failures indicate not only issues in design, but larger epistemological issues concomitant with the promise of collaboration in feminist research. In this paper, I bounce back and forth between language such as inhabiting/dwelling in cracks, working the ruins (Lather, 2000, 2007; St. Pierre & Pillow, 2000b), getting lost (Lather, 2007), and tracking/practicing failure (Visweswaran, 1994). In doing so, I am intentionally playing with a bricolage of feminist poststructural ideas surrounding how to go forth after the fall of the certainty of tenets and categories of humanism such as knowledge, truth, objectivity, and even feminism and education (St. Pierre & Pillow, 2000a). Inhabiting/dwelling in cracks, getting lost, working ruins, and tracking/practicing failure each conjure different and important visceral experiences that offer multiple ways of feeling/viewing/smelling/seeing/hearing/touching and acting upon the task at hand.

This bricolage of feminist poststructural ideas align with what Lather (2013) calls "epistemologies of ruins" (p. 761). St. Pierre and Pillow (2000b) edited a collection of feminist poststructural essays in which they encouraged their contributors to consider what it meant to "work the ruins" of the "failures of humanism, feminism, education, and methodology" (p. 16). The concept of "working the ruins" encourages readers to seek and dwell in gaps, cracks, and spaces rather than stable, reliable, objective spaces. However, the challenge is to do so with an ever-suspicious eye for the humanist fiction that it is possible to "'get it right' once and for all" (p. 4).

For many feminist poststructuralists, there is something to be gained by working from the vantage point of failure. Rejecting foundationalist ways of knowing, feminist poststructuralists assert that there is no innocent way of knowing (Lather, 2007) and

instead champion unstable epistemologies (such as epistemologies of ruins) to constantly interrogate power structures forming that which is privileged including the epistemology itself. Lather (2007) suggests that feminist researchers "get lost" and work toward not knowing rather than confidence in a sure knowing, representing, and telling. For Lather, situating inquiry as (always already) a ruin is not a skeptical, defeatist vantage point, but instead opens up space for new practices:

> To situate inquiry as a ruin/rune is to foreground the limits and necessary misfirings of a project, problematizing the researcher as 'the one who knows.' Placed outside of mastery and victory narratives, inquiry becomes a kind of self-wounding laboratory for discovering the rules by which truth is produced. Attempting to be accountable to complexity, thinking the limit becomes our task, and much opens up in terms of ways to proceed for those who know too much and too little. (pp. 10-11)

Who can begin to explore "what's next," to begin to "think the limit?" For Lather, it is "those who know too much and too little." This seemingly oxymoronic statement parallel's Visweswaran's (1994) suggestion to confront feminist epistemological dilemmas by reading "series of specific social relations ('betrayals') as allegory for the practice of feminist ethnography" (p. 40). As I work the ruins of our duoethnography, I read our failures as a series of paradoxical "betrayals" in hopes of being "accountable to complexity" so as to open up spaces for new ways of thinking and practicing collaborative feminist research.

Reading Through a Lens of Betrayal

In 1988, Judith Stacey asked a question that is still reverberating in feminist scholarship: "Can there be a feminist ethnography?" Her answer was a resounding "No." Stacey warned that feminist ethnographic methods, in their relational nature, ironically have the potential to "subject the researched to exploitation, betrayal, and abandonment

by the researcher" (p. 21) more than detached, impersonal positivist research methods. For Stacey, the feminist ethnographer faces a series of contradictions between her fieldwork experiences and her feminist stance. Dilemmas such as which parts of the story to tell, for whose benefit, and how to present the final publication in a way that honors the collaboration between the researcher and researched require the researcher to make decisions that ultimately betray her participants, herself, and/or her feminist principles.

Visweswaran (1994) adds an interesting twist to Stacey's read in asserting that, not only can a feminist research betray her feminist principles, she can also be *betrayed by* feminist principles. She suggests that there are indeed *possibilities* for a feminist ethnography, but such possibilities require rethinking ethnography as failure, or as a "fiction" performed by a "trickster ethnographer" (Visweswaran, p. 100). The trickster "'trips' on, but is not tripped up by, the seductions of a feminism that promises what it may never deliver" (Visweswaran, p. 100). In particular, the trickster ethnographer suspends her "feminist faith that we can ever wholly understand and identify with other women (displacing the colonial model of 'speaking for' and the dialogical hope of 'speaking with')" (Visweswaran, p. 100). In doing so, Visweswaran suggests the productive possibilities of reading betrayals (often betrayed and betrayer simultaneously) in feminist work. In presenting betrayals in her ethnographic fieldwork as a play, "Betrayal," she "plays" with betrayal by participants, herself, feminist principles, accountability, and the reader. She explains, "'Betrayal' attempts to reflect back at its readers the problems of inquiry, at the same moment an inquiry is conducted, striking through the epistemological paradox of knowing through not knowing" (p. 80). As I read our failures below, I loosely appropriate Visweswaran's concept of reading betrayals as a

multifaceted and always uncertain paradoxical way of dwelling in the cracks of a research project.

"Working the Ruins"

The excerpt below is taken from my own personal research notes written after Ava, Gina, and I watched the episode entitled, *"The Women Tell All"* during the 9th week (of 12) of *The Bachelor*. While I recognize the potential irony of using my own research notes rather than a transcription of the scene from our video footage, I have chosen to do so to reiterate the betrayal inherent in striving to represent lived experiences. Even if I had chosen the transcription, I would have been the "author" of such transcription in choosing which pieces to include, how to represent it on the page, and how to brief and debrief the scene. In using my research notes, I aim to highlight and "own" the perspectives of the disagreement as mine rather than to try and hide them under the guise of "objectivity" of a word-for-word transcription.

Last night's viewing experience (ironically The Women Tell All *episode) was a turning point in this duoethnography on several levels. On the level of our friendship (relationally), and, on the level of methodology (intellectually).*

About half-way through the night, Ava brought up the argument we got into last Monday (the pink elephant in the room). She said that she didn't feel like reading the blog or participating in the conversation all week because she was so mad, "over it." She felt like her voice wasn't being heard. Gina rebutted, saying that on the blog everyone has a fair chance to have their voice heard, and that if Ava felt frustrated, she should express those feelings on the blog. At which point Ava said, "OK, my voice can be heard on the blog, but it isn't heard here because I get interrupted." She also pointed out that

she had trouble both finding time to contribute to the blog and in expressing herself via writing. I was feeling physically uncomfortable as they were going back and forth. I literally wanted to crawl out of my skin or retreat further into it so I could hide. The conversation started in the kitchen as we were making margaritas. I added an extra splash of tequila to mine to try to alleviate the awkwardness. I said something along the lines of, "Well, we are all really loud women, and yeah, it is hard sometimes to get a word in." My immediate reaction was to quench the fire rather than to let it keep going.

We returned to the couch and Gina rekindled the discussion during the next commercial break. I was sitting in between the two of them, and could feel myself sinking deeper into the couch with each breath, trying to make myself smaller, drawing my arms tighter, my knees in, grasping my margarita glass with my whole body, and staring into it to avoid eye contact. I am actually physically uncomfortable and tense even as I write this. I woke up three times last night thinking about what had transpired; this was not how this study was "supposed" to go, and I feel responsible for putting us all in this scenario. I truly wanted this to be a positive collaborative experience for everyone.

I busted into the conversation and tried to smooth things over by saying, "Well, we were all different shades of drunk" (again, my effort to shift blame and pacify the situation). At which point, Gina pointed out how I started the fight by making a prodding comment then dipping out and taking a front row seat for the drama. "It's not fair, Callie, for you to incite an argument, stoke the fire, and then not participate." Ava agreed.

Then, the conversation turned. Ava said that one of the reasons she wanted to do the study with us was because she was interested in having and meeting good girlfriends.

She got misty-eyed as she talked about the isolating factor of the PhD program. I must have looked pained because she asked me if I was gonna start crying, to which I vehemently responded, "No. I'm not gonna cry. But, I can *vividly remember how rough the PhD program was my first year." Why am I so against crying as a way of showing emotion? Why do I feel so awkward when other women cry? I feel like I don't know what to do as a researcher or as a friend. Then, all of a sudden, Gina started crying. I gulped my margarita. She shared a story about how rough her PhD program was, and how at times she thinks she would have respected herself more if she had chosen to drop out. In a twisted way, I felt relieved to hear her say this, not because she had experienced pain, but selfishly, because hearing her say this made my own frequent "fight or flight" feelings "normal" or OK to feel.*

The Bachelor *episode became dull background noise as we were enveloped in our own conversation about our relationships with one another and strife in doctoral programs. Ava and Gina then stayed and chatted for an hour after the show ended but, even as they left, I didn't feel as if we had reached any sort of resolution. I felt unsettled.*

I realized that all three of us have different motivations for participating in this research and different levels of commitment to the project. It almost seems like Gina and I have grown closer than Ava and I during this process. Is this because Ava has missed several nights of watching The Bachelor *with us? Ava also said that this was becoming too much for her time-wise. It just feels weird to me, like she doesn't want to be here. I don't want for her to feel obligated or "make" her stay with the project. But, then again, I really don't want her to leave or not participate (both because I value her as a friend and colleague and because this is my dissertation data). What do I do?*

The above research reflection was the second time I had visited this particular crack in the study (the first while actually living it). I have reflexively approached it four more times: a) when I was deciding how to (not) blog about the experience; b) when Ava, Gina, and I watched the video footage of us watching the show; c) when I initiated the collective writing process and realized that Ava still chose to opt out of full participation; and, d) as I choose to solo-author this piece. The longer I work the ruins of this experience, the more "reads" I have of the event. Through reflection, I realized that, although the original purpose of the study was to explore the ways in which we challenged, (re)produced, assigned, and constructed gendered subjectivities for ourselves and one another in the leisure spaces of watching *The Bachelor,* what was more interesting was the ways in which we were performing gendered subjectivities as researchers within the work space of conducting collaborative research. Despite my efforts to create a feminist project about feminine bodies where everyone had a voice, where everyone had an equal opportunity to speak, Ava felt unheard. In exploring this failure in the research, I read Ava's silence and choice to opt-out of full participation as four paradoxical "betrayals."

Reading Silence: Betrayal of our Agreement?

Ava[7]:

[7] I aim to honor Ava's silence and acknowledge the space that her silence afforded for thinking about collaborative feminist research differently.

Frustrated. My immediate reaction to Ava's silence was to feel a level of betrayal. Feminists have pointed to lack of buy-in as problematic when attempting collaborative research (Kirsch, 1999). I thought, "Ava doesn't have the buy-in to the project that Gina and I both have." Whether it was the sheer amount of time that the project took, or a shift in desire (we all have had the experience of signing up for something then deciding we weren't that "into" it), I felt that this study was not one of Ava's top priorities. At the time of the above disagreement, Ava had missed three of the nine episodes. She was almost always the last one to post her blog entry each week and rarely posted comments like Gina, Anita (an outside blogger who followed our blog), and I did. During the pre-study meeting, we all appeared to be on the same page regarding the time commitment and level of involvement the project would entail. She had chosen to collaborate and now was choosing to not participate. So, along with Gina, I thought, "What could be more equitable than the blog?" I thought we had created an open space for Ava's voice to be heard, she simply needed take the time to share her thoughts and show up to my house to watch the show. How could she be heard if she wasn't present? I was also becoming increasingly aware of a difference in epistemological stances between myself and Ava. While I will not label her, I label myself as a poststructuralist. Grasping for reasons to blame for what I saw as a lack of buy-in, I pointed to a difference in epistemological viewpoints. I worried that she judged the research process as silly, or unimportant, or as not producing "good enough" data, and she wanted to opt-out of the study in order to not be associated with a study that did not align with her worldview.

Reading Silence: Betrayal of the Feminist Promise of Relational Research?

Ava:

"If this is a story about 'betrayal,' then the central, unspoken betrayal here is of course my own assumption of a universal sisterhood between women" (Visweswaran, 1994, p. 41).

But, what if, instead of a lack of buy-in on Ava's part, it was I who was betraying the promise of "feminist" relational research? Feminist research is, by nature, relational rather than distant (Olesen, 2011). As I planned the study, I chose Ava and Gina (colleagues I knew on a professional level, but not on a personal level) and assumed that because we were all women and we all loved *The Bachelor,* we would automatically be friends. Feminist researchers have pointed to differences such as race (Johnson-Bailey, 1999), sexuality (Faulkner, 2013), class (Johnson-Bailey, 1999), and educational status (Brayboy, 2000; Villenas, 1996) as presenting challenges in creating relationships among same-gender participants and researchers. Gina, Ava, and I were similar on all of the major markers (race, class, gender, sexuality, education, age, socio-economic status). I assumed, along with Visweswaran, "universal sisterhood," especially with our social marker overlap, so we did not take time before the study to hang out and get to know one another better as friends before we became researchers. I sold the project as one that would be "fun" and relational (we would all drink wine and watch *The Bachelor* and enjoy our "girl-time" with one another). At some point, that did not occur for Ava and,

arguably, neither for Gina nor myself. Friendship, for me, was a secondary goal to completing the project and generating thoughtful conversation. Inadvertently, in putting friendship second to data, I created a hierarchical rather than relational space. Further, we were on a timeline driven by the weekly air-date of each episode and the dissertation deadlines. Therefore, when we left an episode with hurt feelings, we did not have (choose to) make time to pause, give each other space, and work on our relationships as we might in any other nonresearch setting. Instead, we continued to hang out each week, videotape ourselves, blog, and relive all of the moments as we watched ourselves watch. What was supposed to be a relational space became an intellectual space as framed by the research questions, methods, and the constant presence of surveillance.

Reading Silence: The "Research Daddy?" Betrayal in Acting as Marshal of Expectations

Ava:

Perhaps Ava's silence was not a lack of interest or buy-in or a misalignment of motivations for participation in the study. Both of these reads of her silence center on my own intentions for the study. Instead, what if Ava's silence and refusal to fully participate was a way for her to resist the oppression she felt in participating in the study? The loudest and most impactful way for Ava to speak was for her *not* to speak, for her to opt-out of full participation. She needed to know that she would be listened to before she would speak. If she felt unheard in the space of the living room, why would she feel

comfortable sharing her thoughts in an even more public venue of the blog? Had I betrayed both Ava and Gina and my feminist principles by creating a rigid environment in which there was neither space nor time for Ava to speak or be heard in the manner in which she wanted?

When the three of us watched the footage of ourselves watching, I saw myself at times performing "researcher" rather than "girlfriend." Gina had pointed this out (Ava agreed), "It's not fair Callie, for you to incite an argument, stoke the fire, and then not participate," but it wasn't until I saw myself do it while we watched ourselves watch that it registered. I asked loaded emotional questions and then took a step back to observe rather than participate in conversation, silently sinking into the couch and letting the camera capture the scene. Gina explained:

> *For me, there was a level of judgment that I felt. I saw many parallels between the bachelorettes' surveilled living situation, in particular the ways in which we (and other viewers) were judging them, and the ways in which we, ourselves, were being judged. We were being judged by Callie, being judged by a strong dissertation committee, being judged by blog readers, being judged by circles of colleagues....All of that comes with anxiety...It is another level of being in a fishbowl.*

Judged by me? We were co-researchers, collaborators. I had not intended for the women to feel judged by me. Did my unwavering faithfulness to my "feminist methodology" and the study methods ironically create an oppressive experience? Was I, in marshalling the research experience, creating an antifeminist environment in which Ava and Gina felt constantly judged, constricted? Through her silence and in removing herself from full participation, perhaps Ava was refusing to offer herself up as a subject to be judged, to be consumed by me, my committee, and blog readers. Without words, she powerfully asserted, "I won't speak. I refuse to participate in the ways in which you

have established."[8] No matter how "collaborative" we were, the fact remained that I had the last word as I had the most at stake (a dissertation) in the collaboration. *I* came up with the research questions. *I* chose duoethnography. *I* designed the methods of data generation. *I* set up multiple layers of panopticon-esque surveillance (Foucault, 1975). *I* continued to demand that we stick to our agreed-upon methods: We will watch the show each week; we will blog; we will watch ourselves watching; we will co-write the final piece.

For me, this is where the promises of both duoethnographic methodology and collaborative feminist research begin to break down. In my experiences of enacting three collaborative studies (two duoethnographies), there is always one party who is the catalyzer coming up with the idea for the collaborative project and bringing collaborators together and always one party who has more at stake in seeing the project to completion (whether that be grant money, graduation, tenure, or a material or community need). Therefore, issues of ownership and need for completion create power imbalances that can result in feelings of guilt (I no longer want to participate but feel obliged because this is Callie's dissertation) and of one party acting as more of an enforcer (researcher role) monitoring progress of collective goals with her collaborators (participant role). However, because duoethnographic data are collectively produced and owned, all collaborators also have power in refusing to participate or using the data however they choose.

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[8] I do not wish to offer Ava up as a subject for consumption within these pages. I have intentionally used betrayal, in particular my own limits of understanding and abilities to represent Ava's experiences (through multiple discursive (ironic) reads of Ava's subject positions), in order to resist such consumption as this piece is read.

In clinging fiercely to what I had outlined in my dissertation proposal, I became a patriarchal authority figure, the "research daddy,"[9] monitoring, calculating, enforcing. I was enacting a sort of patriarchal, authoritative power concurrent with the academy (the very power I was trying to resist by creating a collaborative feminist research project). According to Foucault (1990/1976), "Power is tolerable only on condition that it mask a substantial part of itself. Its success is proportional to its ability to hide its own mechanisms" (p. 86). The mask that hid my own oppressive power, even from myself, was the guise of "collaborative, feminist research" and the dissertation process. For me, the promise of a "successful" feminist collaborative dissertation project lay both in sticking to the ("good feminist") methods I had outlined and to the contract I had written to my committee in the form of a proposal. The power I held in marshalling the research expectations, however feminist and collaborative my intentions, played a role in producing Ava, Gina, and I as certain types of "woman," "feminist," and "researcher." As Foucault asserts, "Relations of power are not in superstructural positions, with merely a role of prohibition or accompaniment; they have a directly productive role, wherever they come into play" (p. 94). Therefore, in my obedience to the guidelines of feminism and to the structure (research questions, methodology, methods, and time frame) of the dissertation process, I set up norms within the study that disciplined myself, Ava, and Gina into performing certain limited subject positions. All three of us became subjects in

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[9] In a previous duoethnography (Spencer & Paisley, 2013), my co-researcher was also my committee chair. Although we had a hierarchical power relationship at work, as she held the power to determine if I passed or failed; in the research setting, I was the "research daddy." The project was my idea and I held us accountable to the research plan we outlined. Regardless of external power relations, in my experience, the research daddy is the one who feels the most ownership of the project and who initiates the project and the design. I chose "daddy" to allude to the ironically antifeminist feel of the role of the research daddy. Taken from "Who's Your Daddy?," a slang phrase and rhetorical question in which the speaker boasts dominance over the receiver of the phrase, the question is actually quite important in the research setting. Who's your research daddy?

that we were subjected to the power relations of "feminist" and "research," which, I argue, betrayed us in both enabling and limiting possibilities for subject production.

According to Butler's (1990a, 1990b, 1993, 1997a, 1997b, 2004) *performativity* as a theory of subjectivity, a subject is interpellated, or "named" or "called into being" through normalizing discursive structures or categories, for example, at birth, "it's a girl!" Therefore, a subject is simultaneously *subject* and *subjected* to power structures such as "girl" that make her intelligible to the world and to herself. Structures such as gender (as experienced within a historic and cultural context) define the range of "norms" or possible intelligible subject performances. The ways in which a subject embodies and *performs* her subjectivities are not simply practices, they are literally *productive* (hence, performative) of her as a subject. For Butler (2004), the norms (subjugating structures) through which a subject is interpellated, in this case "researcher," "feminist," and "woman," have a double meaning. They are constitutional and compelling while at the same time coercive and constraining. "Although we need norms in order to live, and to live well, and to know in what direction to transform our social world, we are also constrained by norms in ways that sometimes do violence to us and which, for reasons of social justice, we must oppose" (p. 206). Perhaps the norms of our collaborative feminist research culture both provided us direction in the research process, but also did violence by constraining other subject possibilities such as those performed by Ava.

Reading Silence: Making the Project "More" Feminist?

Ava:

> Agency exists in the possibility of a variation within a repetition. In order to be intelligible, we need to repeat the familiar and normalized. The task is not whether to repeat but how to repeat in such a way that the repetition displaces that which enables it. (Lather, 2007, p. 39)

As a twist, (a betrayal of every read of Ava's silence I have suggested thus far) perhaps in disrupting the project, Ava's silence has made the duoethnography a "more" feminist project than ever. Ava's silence and refusal to participate in the ways in which we outlined in the opening meeting interrupted our work and disrupted paradigms of research and life. A goal of feminist poststructural researchers is to destabilize structures of knowledge production (including that of feminist poststructuralism). Ava's silence did just that by putting cracks in the research project and opening up space for "producing different knowledge and producing knowledge differently" (St. Pierre & Pillow, 2000a, p. 1). In this way, Ava had agency in the way in which Lather (2007) suggests. She repeated the normalized aspects of the collaborative feminist duoethnography by going through the motions of completing the study. However, in doing so on her own terms by demanding to be heard, demanding friendship first, and withdrawing from full participation, she displaced the very terms of the collaborative research project (and spurred me to write this paper). Tears flowed during the study when feelings were hurt, voices were silenced, or stories were met with empathy. The central focus was not on how we performed as gendered subjects in relation to *The Bachelor,* but in relation to one another. Therefore, the emotional/relational element (partially spurred by Ava's silence) disrupted the process we were trying to make work intellectually (again, potentially creating a more feminist project).

Even though Ava and Gina are not explicitly writing this piece with me, I am collaborating with them to disrupt any "settled places" (Lather, 2013, p. 642) in our work

as I encounter myself (in conjunction with them) by reading our experiences again and again in this piece. As Ronell (2010) suggests, "Everyone should partner up with the questioning other whose smile one cannot entirely decipher. At no point, however, should one expect a synthesis or any kind of dialectical summation to emerge from the jarring rhetorical consequences of such an encounter" (p. ix). Instead, as reading Ava's performances indicate, rupture of "methodological routine by savoring our critical edges, aporias, and discontents" is to be desired, and might make for a more feminist sort of collaborative research. Where "instead of papering over difference, otherness, and disparity, such work reflects/enacts these issues, suggesting further direction and broader possibilities of 'being-acting-feeling together' through the production of new terms of belonging (MacLellan & Talapalaru, 2012)" (Lather, 2013, p. 642). But, where is there a space for such alternative practices of "being-acting-feeling together" in the academy?

Betrayed by the Academy?: Where Is There Room for Collaborative Research?

I opened this discussion with Visweswaran's (1994) thoughts on failure in the context of research. She suggests that failure signifies a project that can no longer be attempted on the same terms. While I have offered several terms on which this collaborative duoethnographic project can no longer be attempted (betrayals), I want to end by exploring the following question: Where is there room in the academy for collaborative feminist research? In a system where author-order in peer-reviewed publications determines tenure, where is the room for an investigation in which all those responsible for knowledge generation get equal credit as authors? In a system littered with deadlines, where is the room for long silences, for disagreements, for taking a break

on projects in order to mend relationships over coffee? In a system where one must pre-determine research questions, methodology, and methods before even meeting with collaborators (in order to satisfy IRB), where is the room for radical collaboration? Where is there room in a system where committees, journals, and dissertations all present codified guidelines, where "feminist" and "qualitative" must conform to certain formulaic standards in order to "count" as "research?" Where does room exist for the necessarily fluid, continuously tangled, and not predetermined collaborative research where lived relationships (inherent to the word *collaborative*) are central to practice?

Scholars are beginning to imagine postqualitative research, which one begins by working the ruins of their own academic training. "The ethical charge of our work as inquirers is surely to question our attachments that keep us from thinking and living differently" (Lather & St. Pierre, 2013, p. 631). But, as Lather and St. Pierre (2013) assert,

> It is very difficult to think outside our training, which, in spite of our best efforts, normalizes our thinking and doing. The categories we have invented to organize and structure humanist qualitative methodology…research problem, research questions, literature review, methods of data collection, data analysis and representation—assume *depth* in which the human is superior to and separate from the material. The doer exists before the deed, so the researcher can (and must for IRBs) write a research proposal that outlines the doing before she begins. The assumption is that there is actually a *beginning*, an origin, that she is not always already becoming in entanglement. (p. 630)

The next move is a focus on ontology rather than epistemology (Lather, 2013; Lather & St. Pierre, 2013; Mazzei, 2013; Youngblood Jackson, 2013). This move "means 'no methodological a priori' (Marcus, 2009, p. 5). The actual design and practice of the fieldwork of the future are up for grabs" (Lather, 2013, p. 638). Perhaps in the post-

qualitative turn to ontology, room will be made in the academy for a collaborative "entanglement" research practice.

Dear Gina and Ava,

As I write these final words in this reflection, I wonder if, in offering our stories, and Ava, your silence, up for consumption that I have done violence to all three of us by attempting to represent our (visceral, performed) experiences by grasping clumsily at words? In penning a text-centric, traditional, solo article which I plan to submit to an academic journal, am I hypocritically doing that which I speak against in these pages?

In this space between 'failure" and "becoming" created by reading the cracks of our duoethnography, I end with the words of Avital Ronell, "Maybe I should quit here before deconstructive velocities overtake me, tempting me to erase and reverse everything that was said and duly noted. The temptation is always great to delete and then flee from the scene of one's own undoing" (2010, p. x).

Thank you both immensely for your collaboration.

Love,

Callie

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CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION: ARTICLE V: ~~"IT'S JUST ESCAPE:"~~ WHY LEISURE RESEARCH SHOULD RESIST PRESCRIPTION AND CONCLUSION, THE DANGER OF PRAGMATISM

Abstract

What would happen if leisure researchers (we) stopped viewing the "science of leisure" as something that is purely practical? What would happen if we stopped offering conclusions (solutions/prescriptions) in articles? Would this allow for a more inclusive leisure science? Would this allow us to know in different ways? Would it provide space for readers to insert themselves into our scholarship? I explore the above questions by critically reflecting on the ramifications of offering conclusions (solutions to problems, specific suggestions for practice, and metanarratives of experience) in a leisure research publication. My goal is not to say we should delete all conclusion sections from our research reports or demonize all summaries of findings. Instead, I aim to provide fodder for critical consideration as we decide how to proceed with offering conclusions in our work. What is the value of offering prescriptions or solutions versus the damage done by pragmatic foreclosure?

~~"It's Just Escape"~~: Why Leisure Research Should Resist Prescription and Conclusion, the Danger of Pragmatism

> I trouble the ethics of reducing the fear, pain, joy, and urgency of people's lives to analytic categories. Exploring the textual possibilities for telling stories that situate researchers not so much as experts 'saying what things mean' in terms of 'data,' the researcher is situated as witness giving testimony to the lives of others. (Lather, 2007, p. 41)

We all have the "elevator speech" when asked, "What are you studying?" We might tweak it to fit our audience and the context (are we speaking to our mothers in the kitchen, our friends at a bar, or our colleagues at a conference) but, overall, the elevator speech remains the same. The goal: Summarize an entire research project in an engaging way in under 10 seconds. The following was my dissertation elevator speech along with the most common response:

Callie: I am studying the leisure experiences of women watching The Bachelor. *Specifically, I am interested in how women watching the show interact with the messages sent to them by the show and how* we, *yes I am a huge* Bachelor *fan, in turn, perform as gendered subjects in viewing spaces.*

Mom, Friend, Uninterested Colleague: Watching the bachelor is a guilty pleasure; it's just an escape.

After enacting two duoethnographic studies of women watching the show, I was certain of one thing: The leisure experiences of watching the show were not "just" anything (i.e., If the experience was just an escape, why did I find myself thinking "I need to lose 10 lbs." while I was watching? Shouldn't something that is purely an escape offer a break from a body-image beat down? What kind of an escape makes you feel badly about yourself?). The next question that generally followed the elevator speech was, "What did you find?"

I struggled to answer this question. It felt like I was doing a violent act to myself, to my fellow duoethnographers, to other women viewers who might have had completely different experiences, and ultimately to my listener if I packaged our experiences to be consumed in an elevator pitch of simplistic conclusions. Although I recognize that reduction on some level is necessary when reporting research (no one wants to read 88 pages of uncut participant narrative), I saw providing a bulleted list of conclusions, themes of experience (as so often communicated in qualitative leisure research), or implications for practice as truncating possibilities for alternative reads or unquestioned contexts, and potentially doing more harm than good.

Based on my experiences working within a feminist poststructural paradigm and utilizing principles of a duoethnographic methodology, I began to resist writing conclusions or stating a list of "findings" or "results." The goal in writing a duoethnography is to juxtapose the often contradictory stories of multiple researchers' experiences of a phenomenon in order to interrupt one metanarrative of experience and create a space for the reader to enter the conversation with her stories (Norris & Sawyer, 2012; Sawyer & Norris, 2013). However, when my fellow duoethnographer and I presented our research at conferences and in subsequent reviews of our work (Spencer & Paisley, in press), we received feedback such as, "This is very thought provoking, but you leave your questions unanswered. What did you find? What are the specific implications for practice?"

It became clear to me that an overall consensus in our journals and at our conferences is the following: Leisure research should be practice-centric and researchers should offer suggestions for practice or solutions to a practical problem. In a recent

paradigmatic debate (Henderson, 2011; Neville, 2013; Parry, Johnson, & Stewart, 2012) within *Leisure Sciences*, Henderson (2011) and Neville (2013) highlight the pragmatic trend in leisure research. Henderson explains:

> What has evolved in leisure research is a pragmatism suggesting that an ideology or approach is true if it *works* (i.e., if it can advance scientific knowledge in a field or provide practical benefits and/or solutions to problems). Post-positivism seems to fit that definition of pragmatism. (p. 342)

Neville (2013) valorizes pragmatism's practical benefits and solutions, praising pragmatism as a way for leisure researchers to enact a cultural politics for social change due to its "relative utility and potential for reweaving beliefs" (p. 401). I find this valorization problematic. While, I agree with Henderson (2011) that leisure research is trending toward pragmatism (which necessarily means that research with practical outcomes is privileged in our journals), this trend should be challenged. Leisure research does not *need* to be pragmatic; perhaps *recreation* research *can* be. *Leisure Sciences* and the *Journal of Leisure Research* are top journals in North America in our field and, as both titles indicate, both should be leisure-centric (as opposed to recreation-centric). Though, particularly in the U.S., researchers are most likely housed in parks, tourism, hospitality, and/or recreation departments and often proudly call ourselves an "applied" field, we too often conflate recreation and leisure in these journals in particular by linking leisure with recreational outcomes.

The challenge for leisure researchers is not finding a paradigm that fits well with the pragmatic trend, but instead, utilizing paradigms that question the trend itself—perhaps bend it, crack it, break it. For leisure researchers, a focus on pragmatism has the potential to be paralyzing and dangerous, prohibiting other ways of knowing that might not offer specific and direct "solutions to problems." While there remains a need for solid

recreation-focused research with very clear applications, leisure-allied disciplines need to give greater attention to the broader development of leisure theories and the paradigms that underlie them.

What happens when we stop viewing the "science of leisure" as something that is purely practical? What happens when we stop offering conclusions (solutions/prescriptions) in articles? Does this allow for a more inclusive leisure science? Does this allow us to know in different ways? Does it allow space for readers to insert themselves into our scholarship, to begin to critically think about their own experiences in a way that is more difficult in postpositivist leisure scholarship? When we loosen the shackles of pragmatism, does that allow us space to, as Henderson (2011) urgently calls, "do research that will enable the development of understandings of the meanings of leisure that contribute to quality of life in multiple and inclusive ways" (p. 345)?

I want to explore the above questions by critically reflecting on the ramifications of offering conclusions (solutions to problems, specific suggestions for practice, and metanarratives of experience) in a leisure research publication. My goal is not to say we should delete all conclusion sections from our research reports or to demonize all summaries of findings. Instead, I aim to provide fodder for us to critically consider as we decide how we wish to proceed with offering conclusions in our own work. What is the value of offering prescriptions or solutions versus the damage done? While I recognize that it would be ironic and hypocritical for me to offer a solution to the current problem I am posing, I want to be clear that the following critique is highly influenced by my research experiences utilizing a feminist poststructural paradigm and a duoethnographic methodology. Feminist poststructuralism can be a useful paradigm for leisure researchers

to work within in order to destabilize the codification of knowledge in our field (Aitchison, 2000, 2001), and duoethnography is one of many possible methodologies that can be used to help leisure researchers resist conclusions. However, I do not think that these sorts of critiques happen only in feminist poststructural paradigms. Multiple paradigms such as Chicana feminism, critical race theory, queer theory, and postcolonial theory have begun to wrestle with similar issues and could be useful lenses for leisure scholarship.

Consuming Our Research Participants: Research under Neoliberal Capitalism

Tierra was "that girl" on the 17th season of ABC's *The Bachelor*. With nicknames like "Tierrable" and "Tierrorist," she was the woman that America loved to hate. Rose, Bobbie, and I snuggled together on the snowy February Monday evening underneath a pile of fleece blankets on the couch cackling as our wine swished precariously in our oversized glasses. The video camera mounted on a table behind us recorded our laughter, comments, and bodily reactions to Tierra. We watched her get taken away in an ambulance after participating in a polar bear swim in Lake Louise, only to return to the show in the next scene smiling cunningly while eating a cheeseburger in a plush king bed snuggled into her bathrobe with oxygen tubes in her nose and Sean (the bachelor) stroking her hair. We "ate Tierra up." Literally. Each season, the producers "feed" viewers a packaged version of "crazy," which viewers then consume and spit back out at each other. On our post-show blog (www.blogaboutthebachelor.com), we read Tierra's performances as "faking for attention" or "playing damsel in distress" (probably playing

right into the reaction that ABC was hoping for in their purposeful packaging).Then, an outside blogger joined our conversation and interrupted the "Tierra-hating" by pointing to Tierra's mental instability and the injustice ABC was doing in not only placing her in stressful situations, but then capitalizing on her worst moments. ABC, according to this blogger, was not treating Tierra like a human. The network was violently stripping her of her full humanness and, in uncritically consuming her, so were we, as audience members.

Neoliberal capitalism has not only changed our relationship to media, but research has followed suit and become quickly consumable. Savvy Ph.D. students are trained to read abstracts, skim introductions, then skip to the conclusion or discussion section to glean "useful or practical" lessons from the piece. Parry and Johnson (2007) note that the trend in leisure research has been to "decontextualize, distill and otherwise simplify…through standardizing rating scales to aggregate responses with others and reach generalizable conclusions" (p. 120). They express their concern with traditional reductive ways of studying leisure and argue that, in order to do justice to the myriad and complex ways leisure experiences are lived, researchers should think outside the postpositivist, linear, and, I would add, "textocentric" research report box. They encourage researchers to "'push the boundaries' in ways that illuminate the depth and complexity of leisure as understood in a polyvocal fashion" (p. 122).

In decontextualizing, simplifying, "boiling down" data into themes, coding, and standardizing, what are the ethical ramifications of making our participants consumable? Patti Lather, who researched women living with HIV/AIDS (Lather & Smithies, 1997), suggested that making our participants consumable set up an "economy of exchange" (Lather, 2007), which could lead problematically to voyeurism. She presented an

"interruptive" text in which participant voices were on the top of the page and research reflections were on the bottom. Art, poetry, fact boxes, and other forms of representation acted as interludes, interrupting one easy read of the participants' experiences. Lather explains that she strived to write in "a way that troubled habitual frames of representational space that too often offered such women up for consumption and voyeurism" (Lather, 2007, p. 35). Instead, by "fragmenting the story lines and intercutting them with seemingly unrelated segments, the text works to elicit an experience of the object through the very failures of its representation, setting up a different economy of exchange in order to interrupt voyeurism" (Lather, 2000, p. 300).

Just as ABC cut and pasted clips of Tierra to present to the audience a consumable "crazy" woman (this could be a research theme), our packaged conclusions, themes, coding, and metanarratives of the experience of the Other create a consumable package that might do more harm (perhaps iatrogenic), in its one-sidedness, than good. As Parry and Johnson (2007) remind us, leisure is a deep and complex experience that should be understood polyvocally. As conclusions are often presented monolithically, it is important to critically reflect upon how we are packaging our participants (and/or subverting packaging) by the ways in which we choose to represent.

Research for Social and Environmental Justice: The Trouble with Offering Solutions

On the last day of a recent conference on leisure research for social and environmental justice, a discussion began surrounding researchers' moral and ethical obligations to offer readers suggestions or solutions to social and environmental justice issues. *As discussion unfolded, key points from both critical theory and poststructuralism*

emerged. The discourse around critical theory suggested it was not enough to critique an unjust system and step back without offering any solution towards emancipation. *The discourse around poststructuralism* suggested that offering a solution (or even a series of solutions) was an exclusionary practice that would not solve a problem but create new power imbalances. *Although some attendees were firmly rooted in a critical theory and some in poststructural theory (myself included), I recognize that there is plenty of space in the in-between to enact leisure research, and much to be gained from both paradigms. I support paradigmatic promiscuity.* In this section, I will highlight a few arguments within poststructural scholarship that I find particularly salient for leisure researchers moved by social and environmental justice goals.

Offering a solution, when one's aim is social and environmental justice, does two detrimental things: 1) It necessarily excludes other possible solutions, ideas, or practices; 2) It resituates the power dynamic, creating a new power imbalance (i.e., If men are currently privileged in our system, a solution which makes women the privileged group will only create a new unbalanced system. Instead, we should constantly work to destabilize and question that which is privileged). What is foreclosed upon with a list of solutions is a continuous process of (re)imagining multiple solutions for multiple contexts over time. In addition, we are limiting solutions outside the realm of what is currently possible or imaginable. The recent movement, Occupy Wall Street, provides an example of a way in which refusing to prescribe a set of unified solutions to a problem enacted a greater social justice than would have been otherwise possible.

If the originators of the Occupy movement had created a unified group whose demands were clear and who posed a list of solutions to the injustices they were

critiquing, then the government (both local and national) and law enforcement would have been able to efficiently respond to the unified demands (either granting them or not, or making an official pacifying statement) and the movement might have ended swiftly. However, the Occupy movement critiqued a large problem (the oppressive control of the 1%) broadly. This critique led to the formulations of many different problems in many different regions. Occupy movements were localized "battles" against a plethora of issues with myriad demands and solutions that were locally-based. Because the movement was emergent, the organizers did not foreclose upon opportunities to think of new problems or new demands. This made it possible for Occupy to develop new coalitions because they did not clearly and narrowly define themselves. Their broad and inclusive definition was: "We are the 99%" and "we have multiple and contingent problems." So, people who had not originally defined themselves as the 99% had space to enter into the conversation. Because the Occupy movement's critiques were multiple, problems were multiple, and demands were multiple, it continues to work rhizomatically (Deleuze & Guittari, 1987) to put cracks in systems from myriad angles.

In lieu of offering solutions, poststructuralists often use deconstruction to destabilize normative categories. Deconstruction reels against pinning down meaning; meaning is constantly shifting, constantly in question (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012). Deconstructive methodologies "keep things in process, to disrupt, to keep the system in play, to set up procedures to continually demystify the realities we create, [and] to fight the tendency for our categories to congeal" (Lather, 1991, p. 13). Derrida (1976, 1982) suggests that we put our categories "under erasure." When placing a category under erasure, we ~~draw a line directly through it~~. This indicates not that we need to completely

throw out the term all together, but that we need to question its meaning, the structures creating meaning, and the "innocence" of the term. Putting a term under erasure decenters any one, singular, sweeping meaning of that term, highlighting the role of power and context in the way in which we come to understand a concept, therefore opening a space for reconstruction of multiple possible meanings. The practice of placing categories under erasure and deconstructing normalized systems of knowledge production is a productive process in that it opens up multiple cracks and fissures, making room for multiple interpretations, multiple voices (potentially those of whom may not have not traditionally been heard), and layers of meanings, spaces for the unknowable and impossible to enter.

Researcher as Witness Rather than Heroine: Struggling Against Omnipotence (Lather, 2007) and Leaving a Space for the Reader

> This is about some breaching of congealed discourses, critical as well as dominant, some refusal to situate the researcher as the 'Great Emancipator,' saying what things mean, some way to use theory to incite questions and context, rather than to interpret, reduce, fix. (Lather, 2000, p. 302)

In refusing to provide conclusions in the form of prescription, solution, implication for practice, or metanarrative of experience, we are shifting the relationship between researcher and reader as well as giving up some of our power and control over how our research will be read and used. In letting go of the idea of "controllable knowledge" (Lather, 2000, p, 307), researching other's lives looks like "a troubling, as an ethical move outside mastery, heroism, and the wish for rescue" (Lather, 2007, p. 33). In executing and writing two duoethnographies, the experience of including multiple stories

(theses and antitheses juxtaposed with one another), allowing readers to form their own syntheses and add their own stories was at the same time freeing and became extremely uncomfortable and vulnerable. What if readers read my story as naïve, decided I was anti-intellectual, a fool, an idiot, (a bitch?) in the way I was catty toward the women on the show? Did they understand my self-critique, would they "get" the way in which I was "baring my breasts?" (Behar & Gordon, 1995). Would they see my own reflexive feminist struggles?

Richardson (1993) reminds us that leaving a space for others to speak deconstructs the authority of truth claims. "The researcher is embodied, reflexive, self-consciously partial….Space is left for others to speak, for tensions and differences to be acknowledged, celebrated, rather than buried alive" (p. 706). In leaving space for the reader to insert her stories, to interpret our "findings" for herself and to draw her own conclusions, we are also expecting something different of our readers. Britzman (2000) poignantly discusses these expectations,

> These critical practices require something more of readers. Readers…must also be willing to construct more complicated reading practices that move them beyond the myth of literal representations and the deceptive promise that 'the real' is transparent, stable, and just like the representations. Poststructuralist theories of writing and reading may allow readers to challenge and rearrange what it is that structures the reader's own identity imperatives, the reader's own theory of reading that produces boundaries of the credible and incredible. One's own structures of intelligibility might become open to readings not yet accounted for, not yet made. Perhaps the power of the writer and the reader can only reside in an awareness of the play of contradictions and the performances of power that both suture and unravel any… text. (p. 39)

Along with Britzman (2000), I also advocate for research practices and representational strategies that "let the story continue."

~~In Conclusion…~~

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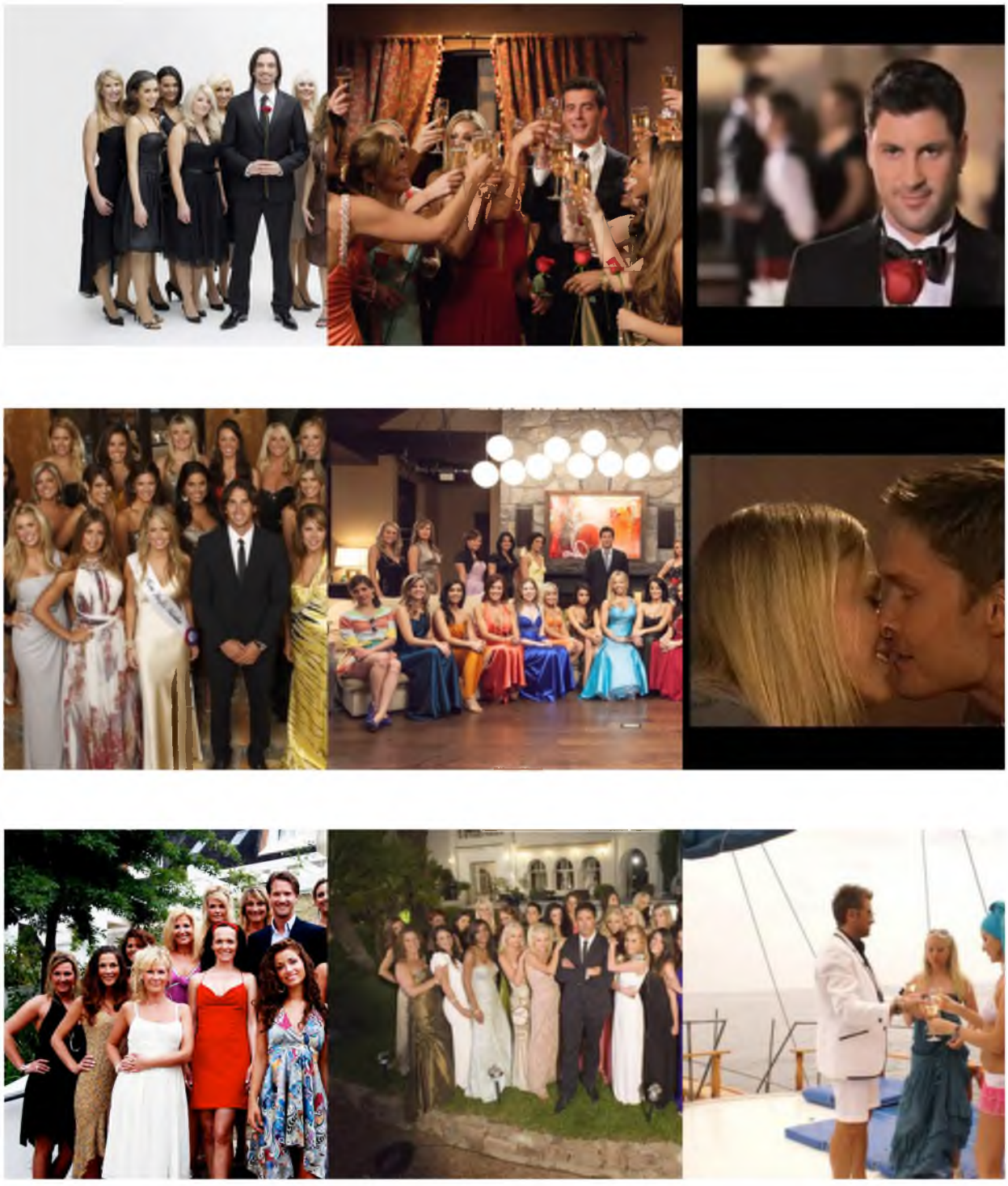
APPENDIX A

THE BACHELOR AROUND THE WORLD



From upper left to lower right Finland, Israel, Ukraine, US, Canada, Poland, Norway, UK, Romania

APPENDIX B

CONSENT COVER LETTER

Consent Cover Letter

"She's so fake": Exploring performances of gendered subjectivity in leisure settings surrounding reality television.

The purpose of this research study is to qualitatively explore how women challenge, (re)produce, assign, and construct gendered subjectivities both for themselves and for other women through their performances within leisure spaces surrounding reality television (specifically ABC's ***The Bachelor)***.

I am doing this study because in the field of leisure studies, leisure experiences of viewing reality TV have been overlooked as site for cultural inquiry although the average American spends over half of their leisure time watching television. Leisure scholars view leisure spaces as places for identity development. *The Bachelor* is a cultural artifact that sends explicit messages about how women *should* perform their gender identities. With an understanding of performances within these spaces, I hope to open up dialogue towards other possible performances for women as gendered subjects.

I would like to ask you to watch the television show, *The Bachelor,* with myself and one other participant. We will videotape our viewing sessions. We will then blog about our experiences of watching the show. Finally, we will re-watch the video footage of ourselves watching the show and collectively reflect upon our experiences.

The risks of your participation in this study are minimal, but could include feeling uncomfortable discussing personal history, attitudes, and events in front of other women.

You may benefit through the development of a community of like-minded women. The reflection process may also deepen your personal understandings of gender and leisure experiences. Society may benefit from the openness of exploring the ways in which women are being influenced and also resisting certain messages sent by this show, rather than ignoring cultural influences and the power of media institutions. Society might also benefit from the participants opening up new sorts of gender performances through both their conversations while watching the show, and conversations within the blog.

You may choose a pseudonym, and any presentations, papers, or other data representations will be de-identified. All data will be stored in a locked cabinet on an encrypted drive in a locked office.

If you have any questions complaints or if you feel you have been harmed by this research please contact: Callie Spencer, University of Utah, 801-585-7350

Contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) if you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant. Also, contact the IRB if you have questions, complaints or concerns which you do not feel you can discuss with the investigator. The University of Utah IRB may be reached by phone at (801) 581-3655 or by e-mail at irb@hsc.utah.edu.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You can choose not to take part. You can choose not to participate and withdraw from the study at any point in time.

By attending the viewing sessions, and posting on the blog, you are giving your consent to participate.

Thank you very much for your participation in this study!

–Callie Spence

APPENDIX C

GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR PRESTUDY MEETING

Guiding Questions for Prestudy Meeting

1. What are your thoughts on anonymity? Would you like to use a pseudonym in the papers? On the blog?
2. How do you feel about photographs on the blog? Videos?
3. How will we deal with ownership of the data?
4. How will we deal with authorship of the dissertation? Conference presentations? Other publications post-dissertation?
5. How will we deal with holding each other accountable throughout this process?
6. What happens when we disagree with one another throughout this process? How will we handle disagreements respectfully and in a way in which to not discontinue friendships?
7. How do we become vulnerable ourselves in a public forum, while still respecting other's boundaries? Where are those boundaries?
8. Any other concerns? Comments? Questions?